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ABSTRACT

The state profiles contained in this document are based on a 1989 survey of statewide or systemwide approaches to assessment and outcomes measurement in postsecondary education. All 50 states, the territory of Puerto Rico, and the District of Columbia are included. A common format provides information on the following aspects: origins of the initiative, a description of the assessment initiative, the primary purpose of the assessment, whether or not common data or test results are collected in the state; whether institutions are required to report to the state about assessment or receive state-level approval of its initiative and how the initiative is funded. Additional comments provide information on state trends in assessment. An introductory reprint from the April 1990 issue of the AAHE (American Association for Higher Education) Bulletin contrasts the 1989 survey results with those obtained from a similar survey carried out in 1987. It is noted that (unlike the earlier group), most of the 1989 respondents clearly distinguished between assessment of basic student skills on entry and assessment of college outcomes; an increasing recognition of assessment as an identifiably distinct policy arena was also observed. Twenty seven states have identifiable assessment initiatives consisting of legislation or board policy in place with only eight states reporting no such initiatives being planned; most new state initiatives stress institutional flexibility; most states are requiring local fiscal support of assessment efforts; and most respondents saw the purpose of assessment to be instructional improvement rather than accountability. (DB)

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STATE INITIATIVES IN ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOME MEASUREMENT: TOOLS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE 1990s

Individual State Profiles

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STATE INITIATIVES IN ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOME MEASUREMENT: TOOLS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE 1990s

Individual State Profiles

by Christine P. Paulson

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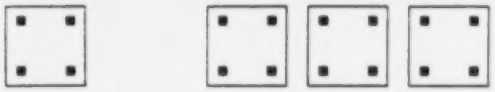
Filling in the Mosaic

The Emerging Pattern of State-Based Assessment



by Peter Ewell, Joni Finney, and Charles Lenth

Three years ago, most of the action in state-based assessment was confined to a few familiar states, with most of the others watching warily from the sidelines. Now assessment has arrived as a fact in a majority of states. As the number of states actively pushing assessment rises, so too has institutional activity: seven of ten public colleges now claim to assess learning outcomes, five of those seven because of a mandate, according to the most recent American Council on Education panel report.

The March 1987 *AAHE Bulletin* reported results of a fifty-state survey on state assessment policy (see "Assessment and Outcomes Measurement: A View From the States"), jointly sponsored by the AAHE Assessment Forum, the Education Commission of the States (ECS), and the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO). At that point, only about a dozen states reported "serious efforts" under way, though most expected the salience of assessment to increase.

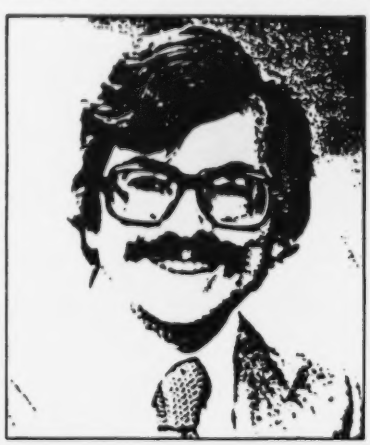
Last winter we took another look. In parallel with the earlier effort, we surveyed chief academic officers of state governing or coordinating boards, requesting them to report on official policy initiatives undertaken in their states and to act as "expert witnesses" about political climate and institutional response. As before, we included items on assessment policy and the motives behind it, on particular instruments and approaches, on resource commitments, and on future plans.

One sign of the times was that we could confidently pose questions in 1989 that were more detailed and sophisticated than in that earlier survey. In three eventful years, we thought state leaders would have progressed considerably in their thinking about assessment. We were not disappointed.

We obtained responses from all but four of the fifty-two agencies (including Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia), either in writing or by telephone interview. In a few states our respondents were not fully informed about state practices—in New York, for example, assessment is a SUNY-system, not a state-agency initiative—but most were able to provide excellent summaries of what was happening. Many attached copies of relevant legislation, policy statements, or guidelines; others shared examples of institutional action in response.

Our first major learning came from the sheer volume and character of the response. In 1987, state respondents *told* us about assessment; by late 1989, many were able to *show* it to us. From what they showed us, moreover, it was clear that thinking about state-level assessment has converged. Earlier, many respondents seemed puzzled by the term *assessment* itself: they reported a range of traditional activities—program review, new admissions standards, retention/completion studies—as "assessment initiatives."

This past winter's survey suggests that a much sharper image of assessment has emerged among state leaders, whether or not their state chooses to engage in it.



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Most respondents, for example, clearly distinguished efforts to assess college outcomes from the assessment of basic skills on entry—a distinction for the most part absent in 1987. Most, moreover, saw assessment as primarily about *learning*; while persistence and student satisfaction remained a common topic for state-level study, they were not viewed as "assessment" in themselves. Finally, though many respondents did see "assessment" as part of a more comprehensive approach to undergraduate improvement, virtually all now recognized it as an identifiably distinct policy arena.

But convergence about its meaning does not imply similarity when it comes to acting out assessment. As in 1987, we were struck by the degree to which no two state efforts are alike. Some are the result of direct legislation, others are "bottom-up" activities based on coordinated action among institutions or systems. All require investigation of student learning, but required studies under that rubric range widely, from basic to higher-order skills to achievement in the major field; many states add to the list "job placement and performance" and dimensions of "customer satisfaction."

All require institutional reporting, but the content of what is called for varies from the periodic completion of process-oriented progress reports to detailed reporting of comparative achievement data. Some are supported by substantial infusions of new state dollars; many more require the use of state appropriations from the base budget.

Given these variations, determining "what the states are doing" in assessment remains an exercise to approach with caution. With this caveat in mind, we looked for commonalities and asked, what do they mean? Briefly, we believe today's pattern of state assessment initiatives can be captured in four cross-cutting themes.

"The Train Is Rolling Fast"

Very few states at this point have nothing to say about assessment. Twenty seven report having in place an identifiable "assessment initiative" consisting of legislation or board policy.

At least an additional half-dozen say they "encourage" or "provide active leadership" for assessment through sponsored conferences, limited grant support, or similar activities. These include Illinois, Kentucky, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Utah. Most of this second group of states report that a formal assessment policy has not been implemented but is under study—often by a special board/staff committee or statewide task force. Some, such as Illinois or Massachusetts, report an "advisory" policy, often linked with statewide planning or program review.

> For the most part, states are now asking for assessment but are not directly paying for it with new state dollars.

Only eight of the forty-eight states—North Dakota, Delaware, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Vermont, and Wyoming—report nothing in place and nothing immediately planned. Even with some of these, "nothing" means "nothing statewide and applicable to all public institutions." In Vermont, there is no universal mandate, but the state's regional public colleges must indeed provide student-outcomes data as part of a mandated review of academic programs.

Another way to chart the course of the "train" is to ask about the future importance of assessment as a policy issue. Twenty-eight of forty-three respondents answering a question we posed on this topic believe that its salience will increase. The remaining fifteen respondents expect its salience to "stay the same"—but ten of these fifteen have active policies already in place.

Taken together, these findings suggest that an important corner has been turned: assessment policy is no longer experimental, it has been "mainstreamed." States not already in the game will undoubtedly feel pressure to make a move soon.

"There's Room to Maneuver . . . So Far"

Most new state initiatives in assessment are board policies that allow institutions flexibility to establish their own approaches. Of the twenty-seven formal initiatives reported, eighteen follow the pattern pioneered by Virginia and Colorado: each institution is required to develop an "assessment plan" consistent with its own mission, and to report periodically on results.

Where actual legislation is in the picture, it tends to include assessment as part of a more comprehensive "reform" package, and leaves it up to state higher education authorities to define the requirement and proceed. Typical of some half-dozen reform bills are "Cutting Edge" legislation in South Carolina and SB140 in Ohio; both aim at general improvement in higher education and call for assessment as part of more comprehensive reporting and targeted-investment schemes.

Board-level initiatives are also sometimes comprehensive, with assessment fit into a larger reform or study package—the statewide strategic plans of Connecticut and Idaho, for example, or reviews of undergraduate education in Illinois.

Statewide mandated assessment instruments—the paramount fear of most faculty and institutional leaders—remain a rarity. Across-the-board cognitive-outcomes testing for college students is in place in only four states, and all but one of them have used the device for some time (Florida, Georgia, New Jersey, and Tennessee); it is "considered possible" in only one more state (Wisconsin). Only Florida's is a true "gateway" examination on the K-12 model.

Three states reported that they had recently considered (or had actually tried) common-outcomes testing and had rejected it as infeasible or inappropriate. Basic-skills testing for entering students is more frequent, but still only four states report complete commonality (Texas, New Jersey, Arkansas, and Vermont). Three more states require institutions to choose among a designated universe of available tests.

Beyond the cognitive domain, common data collection is more frequent but is still not the norm. Four states report using periodic student or alumni surveys in common. Twelve report developing state-

wide comparative statistics on student retention.

In sum, most states appear reluctant to legislate common-outcomes measures of any kind, fearing their political cost in institutional opposition and adverse minority impact. But growing accountability demands make the future of common measures uncertain. As one SHEEO put it, "It all depends on how the institutions respond . . . if they don't take the process seriously, there will be an enormous pressure to centralize."

"You're on Your Own"

The other side of relative freedom of action lies in heightened expectations about local fiscal support for assessment. For the most part, states are now asking for assessment but are not directly paying for it with new state dollars.

Only six of the twenty-seven formal initiatives reported have a substantial funding base that provides institutions with new dollars or that will support new statewide data-collection efforts (Florida, New Jersey, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, and Washington). Most of these fund programs that have been in place for some time. Most of the newer initiatives do not have explicit budgets associated with them; institutions must absorb additional costs within their existing base.

An additional four or five states report special, one-time investments ranging from $25,000 to $500,000 for pilot studies or exploratory activities. In supporting initial pilots, these states duplicate the developmental pattern of Virginia and New Jersey, which preceded substantial expenditures on assessment with a variety of exploratory investments.

In Washington, $300,000 was spent on a major study exploring available standardized general-education examinations—following which a decision was made to go the other way, with an institution-centered approach. In Minnesota, $500,000 was allocated for a range of pilot efforts across institutions. Most of these initial investments were modest in size and involved substantial cost sharing by institutions.

A half dozen states support assessment at selected institutions through incentive or categorical funding mechanisms. In Colorado, assessment has been partially supported through "funds for excellence" grants to individual institutions. In South Carolina, similar funds are available through "Cutting Edge" appropriations aimed at general higher education improvement.

In Maryland, "reorganization dollars" help institutions adapt to a new state governance structure and its associated reporting requirements.

The overwhelming public posture for state assessment remains "improvement," not "accountability."

In all such cases, institutions apply for assessment support through a general-purpose grant-making process—an action with significant opportunity costs if they have other worthy programs that they wish supported through available categorical funding.

Overall, the level of fiscal support for assessment in most new state initiatives contrasts strikingly with the earlier pattern set by states such as Florida, Tennessee, New Jersey, and Virginia. Partly this reflects actual fiscal conditions, as many states report growing budgetary problems, but mostly it reflects an emerging policy sentiment that assessment should not be considered an "add-on" activity. Legislative feeling, as one respondent noted, is that "this is something the institutions should have been doing all along."

"It's Still About Learning"

In contrast with much of our internal rhetoric about assessment's purposes, the overwhelming public posture for state assessment remains "improvement," not "accountability."

Thirty-one of thirty-nine respondents to a question about assessment's "primary purpose" in their state report it to be "institutional self-improvement" or "curricular revitalization." Three state respondents see assessment's primary purpose as that of establishing more uniform academic standards. While fifteen feel that "demonstrating the effectiveness of higher education to the legislature and the public" is a "major purpose" of their programs, only six respondents report this as assessment's primary emphasis.

Respondent comments about "how assessment has helped shape our thinking" reinforce the priority of academic over accountability issues. Several noted a major impact in reducing "system discontinuities" hindering student transfer or transition from high school to college. "Concern with assessment has made it easier for people to talk about course equivalencies . . . and this is badly needed," one respondent told us. Another emphasized the impact the process was having on transferability in general education.

But most respondents were simply impressed by assessment's ability to "focus attention" on undergraduate issues in new and compelling ways. As one summarized, "I think that all involved [in our state] have learned that 'assessment,' properly understood, engenders creativity and is a means by which to elevate collective aspirations for institutional performance. . . . To the extent that it is institutionally useful, it will be successful."

In Sum

We believe that, taken together, these survey results point to an emerging policy consensus. State leaders are beginning to agree that when handled properly, assessment can be a powerful "lever for change." Coupled with such existing policy mechanisms as marginal incentive funds or program review authority, assessment can help state leadership become more proactive in addressing critical issues of instructional quality and curricular coherence. Willingness to act is itself a decisive development; up to now, most states have been content to allow institutions full discretion in such matters.

The "bottom line" of current initiatives in assessment, we believe, is that state-level resolve is becoming both insistent and permanent. ■

Note

More detailed survey findings will appear in a forthcoming ECS publication. For more information, contact Joni Finney.

Individual State Profiles

STATE INITIATIVES IN ASSESSMENT AND OUTCOME MEASUREMENT: TOOLS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE 1990s

by Christine R. Paulson

The following state profiles are based on responses to the latest ECS survey of statewide or systemwide approaches to assessment and outcomes measurement. The survey was cosponsored by the Education Commission of the States (ECS), the American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) and the State Higher Education Executive Officers (SHEEO).

The profiles are based on responses to a 10-page questionnaire that was mailed to SHEEO academic officers last fall. In many cases, they responded not only with answers to the questionnaire, but also with relevant reports and policies. In other cases, the questionnaire was answered through telephone interviews. In a number of cases, pertinent information was obtained through follow-up interviews after the survey form had been returned.

The foregoing process was instrumental in bringing about thorough results: all 50 states, the territory of Puerto Rico and the District of Columbia are represented in this summary due to the help of respondents from each of these areas.

A common format has been developed for each state profile to answer some of the most commonly-asked questions regarding state and institutional assessment. The format targets the following areas concerning postsecondary assessment: Origins of the initiative; a description of it; the primary purpose of assessment; whether or not common data or test results are collected in the state; whether institutions are required to report to the state about assessment or receive state-level approval of its initiative and how the initiative is funded. In addition, the respondent was asked to provide any additional comments pertinent to assessment as it is evolving in that particular state.

In writing these summaries, the intent was to provide specific information about each state's assessment initiative to serve those who are most closely associated with the issue. It is hoped this data will provide a basis for comparison and analysis that will equip academic professionals and state policy makers with the information they need to improve teaching and learning in postsecondary classrooms in the critical years ahead.

ALABAMA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The staff and members of the state Commission on Higher Education initiated the assessment policy, and continue to take a major interest in its development. As the policy directs state higher education institutions to develop their own assessment procedures, the institutional role has become a major one as assessment plans are put into place.

Description of the Initiative:

The Alabama Commission on Higher Education adopted a policy in May 1988 requiring each institution to put into place an assessment program. The institutions were required to describe the form of assessment they planned to use in the institutional planning statements they submitted in July 1989.

No mandates to institutions are provided for in the policy, as it is designed to develop assessment through voluntary compliance and persuasion. A possibility exists that at some point future program approval may hinge to some extent on compliance with assessment objectives.

The policy on "Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes" was developed and adopted along with 14 other initiatives designed to enhance quality in state institutions of higher education. These related policies address such issues as academic preparation for college-level study; funding formulas; student aid; admission standards; general education; articulation from two- to four-year institutions; program accreditation and program review.

Primary Purpose:

Statewide improvement of undergraduate education.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

At this point institutional assessment plans are voluntary and to be developed by the institutions themselves. There is no state-level collection of test results or data from common instruments.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

The institutions are required to submit assessment plans to the Commission on Higher Education for comment, but not for formal approval. The first set of assessment plans was presented in July 1989, and the first set of annual results on these plans will be heard in July 1990.

Funding:

No new nor distinct funding was attached to the assessment policy. The policy is intended at this time to be funded through current appropriations.

Comments:

Members of the Commission on Higher Education are interested in using incentive funding to promote assessment within the institutions if funding could be found for this purpose. Approval of new academic programs could possibly then be tied to successful outcomes as measured by the institutional assessment policies.

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ALASKA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The commissioners of the Alaska Commission on Postsecondary Education initiated a process of policy inquiry in the spring of 1990 focused on assessment processes as an avenue of demonstrating accountability and effectiveness. The Board of Regents of the University of Alaska also incorporated a model of system assessment in its program evaluation process reviewed at the April 1990 meeting.

Description of the Initiative:

While no initiative is currently in place, the ACPE will be actively investigating the possible direction and scope of assessment processes when it convenes two work groups which will meet this summer. One of the groups will address assessment in the vocational area, and the other will concentrate on assessment in academic subjects. Several principles will guide the process. They are:

- The primary purposes of assessment are to strengthen the quality and effectiveness of schools and systems in relation to the performance of their self-defined missions.
- Students are to be priority beneficiaries of quality assessment processes.
- The missions and operations of the various postsecondary schools are distinct, and accountability assessments must take these differences into account.
- Regulatory intrusion into the administration, routines and operations of schools and institutions should be minimal.
- The various postsecondary schools and institutions must be centrally involved in design and development of assessment policy.
- Schools must be held accountable for clear statements of their missions and expectations for student learning; for appropriate, systematic efforts to measure the attainment of these expectations, and for efforts to improve learning as a result of these assessments.

In preparation for the work sessions and policy inquiry process, the ACPE has sent a letter actively seeking comments, concerns and suggestions as to the development of an effective assessment criteria. The letter was sent to a diverse group of individuals concerned with higher education, such as members of academic, vocational and proprietary schools, and major employers. Development of an assessment policy is to include legislators, institutional administrators, members of the public, the faculty, representatives of the governing and coordinating boards, among others.

The letter also contained information on assessment itself, and included background on policies in place in other areas, such as measurement of basic skills; lower-division outcomes assessment; general education/intellectual skills assessment; exit exams in

the major or concentration; alumni surveys as to satisfaction with their education and job preparation; and computer-skills assessment.

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ARKANSAS

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The governor and the legislature together with the staff of the state Department of Higher Education were all major initiators of the state's assessment initiatives. Most involved now in developing and implementing the assessment initiatives are the members of the institutions of higher education, and the staff and board members of the Department of Higher Education.

Description of the Initiative:

The mandates related to assessment are contained in several bills passed by the legislature. They are:

1989 Ark. Act 98 -- This legislation authorizes the state Board of Higher Education to identify a minimum core of high school courses recommended for preparation of college and to set a minimum general education core which may be transferred among the state institutions of higher education. It also requires that beginning with the fall 1991 semester, each state-supported institution of higher education shall implement an assessment program to evaluate student learning within the general education core curriculum. Board of Higher Education approval of these plans is required prior to implementation.

1989 Ark. Act 244 -- This new law requires annual performance reviews of all faculty members of state-supported institutions of higher education beginning with the 1990-91 school year. The review is to be "rigorous" and serve at least in part as a basis for faculty promotion, salary increases and job retention. The performance appraisal system is to be approved by the State Board of Higher Education prior to implementation.

1989 Ark. Act 245 -- Requires uniform reporting of athletic income and expenditures at all state-supported institutions of higher education with annual review by the Legislative Joint Auditing Committee and disclosure to the public through the State Board of Higher Education. A report on these findings is to be submitted prior to the legislative session commencing in January 1991.

1989 Ark. Act 267 -- Mandates the development of a data collection system in order to report retention and graduation rates for all students enrolled at state colleges and universities, with particular emphasis on those participating in intercollegiate athletic programs. For those students in a sports program, the data on retention and graduation must be collected as of the fall of 1989, and for the student population as a whole, the initial report on the findings of retention and graduation is due by December 15, 1993.

1989 Ark. Act 397 -- Requires the State Board of Higher Education to establish "role and scope designations" for each of the state-supported institutions of higher education. The designations are to be completed by January 1, 1990, and fully reviewed every five years.

In accordance with these directions and mandates, the state Department of Higher Education is putting into place the internal processes and procedures necessary to implement the assessment, general education, data collection and other mandates.

Primary Purpose:

Statewide improvement of undergraduate education.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

Based on the 1989 legislation, data collection procedures are being developed for assessing basic skills of students entering state colleges and universities; for assessing achievement on the general education core which is under development at these institutions, and for determining retention rates of admitted students. Currently, results of assessment and placement of entering students in the colleges and universities are reported back to the high schools from which they graduated.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

The primary function of student assessment and placement data is to improve student preparation; the primary function of program review is to enhance program effectiveness, and the primary function of assessment on the general education core is curricular improvement.

Funding:

Assessment is currently being funded out of current appropriations.

Comments:

The issues of access and quality enhancement are other concerns of the assessment initiatives. These programs are being linked to similar reforms being undertaken at the elementary and secondary levels. Assessment seems to have developed greater commonality among the state's college programs and focused more attention on program quality.

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ARIZONA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The assessment directive was developed by the staff of the Arizona Board of Regents, and adopted by the Board in 1987. Currently most involved in its implementation are the institutions, and the staff and members of the Board of Regents.

Description of the Initiative:

The Board of Regents has directed each university to develop and implement a comprehensive assessment program and to report annually on the results.

Primary Purpose:

The major purposes are the improvement of undergraduate education and to focus attention and activity on the postsecondary curricula.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

Data collection procedures are in the developmental stage.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

Institutions are to submit plans of their assessment programs every year in May, but formal approval by the Board is not required. However, the Board has the authority to hold the institutional President accountable for compliance with the plan.

Funding:

Assessment is funded by the individual institutions through current resources.

Comments:

The future direction of assessment will depend upon how well the institutions respond to the current directive which allows them full latitude to develop and implement their own programs.

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CALIFORNIA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

California has no state-level mandate for assessment, but relies on the institutions to assess student learning and achievement. However, through the state budgetary and legislative process, elected officials become involved in institutional assessment.

Currently, the major actors in institutional assessment are the legislature and the board of the California Postsecondary Education Commission. The institutions are primarily responsible for student assessment.

Description of the Initiative:

Two recent pieces of legislation reflect goals related to assessment of student learning. Both sponsored by Assemblyman Tom Hayden, they are:

- Assembly Concurrent Resolution 141 of 1986 -- This directed the Commission to study use of "talent development, value-added, and performance-based budgeting (as applied) to measuring and improving the quality of higher education." In response, the Commission researched and published a report in March 1987 called Funding Excellence in California Higher Education.

- Assembly Bill 2016 of 1987 -- This directed the Commission to develop options for measuring and improving students' learning and development in college, including funding approaches to support these options. In response, the Commission published Beyond assessment: Enhancing the learning and development of California's changing student population in December 1988.

At the institutional level, the institutional assessment programs are expected to address student satisfaction, remediation/developmental instruction, and retention/completion rates.

Primary Purpose:

The major focus in the state towards assessment has been to leverage additional financial support for higher education; to publicly demonstrate the effectiveness of higher education to the legislature and the public, and to stimulate action and attention to the curricula at the institutional level.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

Not applicable. There is no state-level reporting of student achievement. The Commission does maintain and report data on degree completion by level of degree, ethnicity, gender and major.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

Institutions are not required to submit assessment plans to the state for formal approval. However, the institutions are required to annually report the number of students who enroll in Subject A, a remedial writing course. The course is required of students who enroll in the University of California and fail a writing exam. This exam is required of high school who have not met the breadth requirements in English.

The legislature in its FY89 appropriations act also recommends that UC report back to local school boards the total number of their graduates enrolling in UC, and the percentage of that group who were required to take Subject A.

Other statewide reporting includes student enrollment, student and faculty demographics, graduation rates by degree, faculty salaries, and transfer rates from two-year to four-year institutions.

Funding:

Most student-oriented assessment is paid for with institutional funds. Normally a special state appropriation will cover an assessment of institutional/program performance. The Commission funds the ongoing review and approval of new programs through its base appropriations.

Comments:

The Commission will continue to review issues of accountability and assessment in higher education in order to better ascertain the state's historical role in these functions, and to determine the need, if any, for change.

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COLORADO

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The state legislature mandated in 1985 that public postsecondary institutions develop an assessment process. Under this directive, the institutions are now the most heavily involved in the development of assessment procedures.

Description of the Initiative:

The state legislature enacted a bill in 1985 (HB 1187) that mandated that "institutions of higher education be held accountable for demonstrable improvements in student knowledge, capacities, and skills between entrance and examination." In addition, by July 1, 1990, the law authorizes the Colorado Commission on Higher Education to withhold up to 2% of its appropriation if it has not implemented, or is failing to implement, any part of the accountability program.

A policy based on the legislation, now Colo. Rev. Stat. 23-13-101, was subsequently approved by the CCHE. It required the governing boards of the state's 28 public postsecondary institutions to submit accountability plans for each institution to the CCHE by December 1, 1988. The CCHE had until March 1989 to consider and approve the plans. All institutional boards complied and the plans were all approved. Assessment data collected by each institution was reported for the first time on October 1, 1989. The CCHE compiles the information submitted by institutions into an annual accountability report which is also required by the legislation.

Information that is to be included in each institutional assessment plan, as stipulated in the CCHE policy, covers:

- A description of the process used in developing the institutional accountability program, including involvement of the public-at-large and the specific groups who participated.
- A statement of institutional goals and objectives for undergraduate education.
- A statement of expectations for student outcomes in terms of knowledge, intellectual capacity and skills, which may also cover student growth as reflected by self-confidence, persistence, leadership, empathy, social responsibility and understanding of cultural and intellectual differences.
- A description of how student improvement from entrance to graduation will be assessed, used and reported.
- A description of how the institution will collect and report student retention and completion information.
- A description of how graduates' performance will be measured in terms of employment, personal advancement, and achievement in graduate/professional school.

- A description of how information on student/alumni satisfaction with their education will be assessed and used.

- A description of how minority student data will be disaggregated and reported in accordance with affirmative action objectives.

- An estimate of costs involved in implementing the accountability program, and a description of the funding resources used.

- A description of how each institution will disseminate the results of its accountability plan, in addition to the required reporting to the CCHE.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose is improvement of undergraduate education statewide through individual institutional improvements.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

The institutions are devising their own institutional data collection and reporting systems which meet CCHE approval.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

The CCHE has approved the accountability plans submitted by the institutional governing boards. Reporting of data collected through these plans is required by October 1 of each year with compiled results to be forwarded to the state legislature.

Funding:

Institutions are expected to fund the accountability plan through its annual appropriation. Failure to submit or comply with the plan could result in a reduction of up to 2% of the institution's funding.

Comments:

The accountability initiative has prompted a recognition that general education needs to be perceived as a coherent body of knowledge, and that the outcomes of a general education need to be articulated for students to become fully educated. The initiative reflects this shift towards greater integration of the student's educational experiences.

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CONNECTICUT

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The Board of Governors for Higher Education in 1986 identified assessment as a statewide strategy for enhancing undergraduate education. The basic strategy adopted in Connecticut has been to call upon each institution to develop a five-year assessment plan.

Description of the Initiative:

The Board of Governors Strategic Plan for Higher Education adopted in 1986 calls upon public colleges to develop comprehensive assessment strategies as a way to strengthen undergraduate education. The Board commenced the effort with a statewide conference on institutional assessment in 1987 which focused on model assessment initiatives around the country. Copies of these proceedings are available from the Board office. The Commissioner of Higher Education subsequently appointed an advisory committee which developed Statewide Guidelines for Institutional Assessment, adopted by the Board of Governors in May 1989. The guidelines call for the development of institutional assessment plans by each public college and university that are to be submitted to the Board no later than June 1990.

The assessment plans are to be phased in over a five-year period with the initial report to the Board on implementation required by June 1991, with subsequent reports due on a biannual basis thereafter. The assessment plans are to reflect the institution's historic role and mission, with particular attention to the following:

- Clearly defining educational goals and objectives that are linked to institutional mission, role and scope.
- Measuring how effectively stated goals and objectives are being achieved.
- Utilizing the results of assessment to further enhance teaching and learning.

Specifically, the institutional plans are also to provide for assessment in the following areas: (a) general education; (b) academic programs; (c) basic skills testing, placement and remediation; (d) retention; (e) student development; and (f) follow-up on graduates.

Independent colleges and universities are encouraged to participate on a voluntary basis.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of the state's assessment initiative is the improvement of undergraduate education.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

The assessment initiative relies upon each sector of higher education to develop its own testing program. Currently the regional community colleges are using a basic skills test systemwide.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

The assessment plans developed by the institutions are to be submitted to the Board of Governors for review. The institutions will submit biannual assessment reports to the Board beginning in 1991.

Funding:

No special funding has been provided for assessment, to date.

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DELAWARE

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

No assessment policies or legislation are in effect at this time.

Comments:

Interest in assessment as an issue is expected to stay the same in the coming year or two.

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DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

At the district level, there are no assessment policies in effect at this time. Some may be forthcoming if the recommendations of The Urgent Challenge are put into effect. The publication was issued in November 1988 by the Mayor's Advisory Commission on Postsecondary Education. Among its recommendations is the establishment of an education commission or board to coordinate education policy development across agency and institutional lines.

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FLORIDA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The state legislature has been the primary initiator of assessment activities in Florida. The legislature took the first formal steps towards a mandated testing program in 1979 when it directed the state Board of Education to adopt minimum academic standards for college students in the areas of communication and computation.

Description of the Initiative:

Acting on the 1979 directive, the state Board of Education created the Articulation Coordinating Committee to oversee the standard-setting process. This committee created another entity called the Essential Academic Skills Project (EASP) which was charged with recommending standards generated along with faculty and institutional involvement.

The EASP itself was divided into four units:

- The Project Director and Executive Committee.
- The Statewide Task Force which was charged with identifying the essential skills college students must attain.
- The Institutional Task Force which provided for faculty involvement and review of the standards recommended by the Statewide Task Force.
- The Standing Committee on Student Achievement which sought to identify tests or other means to measure the essential skills.

By February 1980, the Statewide Task Force identified the essential skills and the Institutional Task Force coordinated a process of faculty review. Eventually, over 2,600 surveys were returned from members of the colleges and universities all over the state. The Statewide Task Force then revised the list of essential skills and re-circulated the new list again among the faculty. The final list of competencies was adopted by the Statewide Task Force in December 1980.

However, while this process was underway, the Standing Committee on Student Achievement was also meeting and reviewing the testing materials that were then commercially available. It also completed its work in 1980 after an exhaustive search of commercially-available testing instruments. Its final conclusion was that no tests then existed that could adequately measure student achievement of the type of skills that the Statewide Task Force had identified.

Nonetheless, interest in the topic of student achievement did not dissipate, and the EASP, and the Commissioner of Education established the College-Level Academic Skills Project in 1981. It was created to assist in the development, implementation and maintenance of a sophomore testing program. The CLASP also had several

components, similar to the organization of the earlier EASP. They consisted of three faculty groups, namely:

- The Task Force on Communication Skills.
- The Task Force on Computation Skills.
- The Standing Committee on Student Achievement.

As before, the task forces concentrated on identifying the essential skills college students should possess, and the standing committee examined possible testing instruments. They relied heavily on the work of the earlier EASP, and arrived at a final listing of 117 competencies they felt college students should have.

After the Articulation Coordinating Committee reviewed the final list, the Commissioner of Education submitted it to the State Board of Education for approval. The State Board adopted the final list of competencies in September 1981 as Rule 6A-10.031 of the Florida Administrative Code. The list served as the basis for the development of the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST), a so-called "rising junior" test now required of all college sophomores.

The action by the State Board at this time encompassed not only the adoption of the competencies list, but also a companion rule which directed the development of specifications for test items which could be used to measure the essential competencies. (Rule 6A-10.311 of the Florida Administrative Code).

With this directive issued in September 1981, the faculty task forces of the CLASP then began drafting the specifications for measuring the identified computational and communications skills. This process was complete in 1983 when the final recommendations were submitted to the Department of Education. The DOE then issued invitations to bid on the development of the test items to members of the state community colleges and universities. Those eventually awarded contracts had to include academic and measurement specialists in the test development.

While this test development process was underway, the state legislature remained active proponents of the testing concept. In its 1982 session, the legislature mandated the initial implementation of the CLAST, and appropriated funds for that purpose. (Section 229.551(3)(j), F.S.) The legislature also required that after the fall term of 1982, all students must present their CLAST scores in order to receive an Associate of Arts degree, or to be admitted into the upper division of state colleges or universities. (Chapter 82-180, L.F.)

The CLASP responded to this legislative mandate by specifying four areas for testing. Three of the four subtests are objective, covering reading, computation and writing. The fourth subtest involves a comprehensive writing sample through a response to one of two essay topics.

Until August of 1984, students could satisfy the requirement by simply submitting their scores for each of the four subtests. After that date, minimum standards had to be met for students to gain upper-division status.

The decision to impose minimum standards was accompanied by a faculty review process similar to the one used in the test development. Institutional panels of diverse representation were convened. Based on their judgment, the panels suggested passing scores based on what they felt achievement levels for college sophomores should be. Their findings were then forwarded to a state panel which reported to the State Board of Education.

The State Board approved the recommendations in March 1984 (Rule 6A-10.312(1) of the Florida Administrative Code). The rule allowed for the minimum standards to be phased in gradually with full implementation set for August 1989. It provided interim performance standards would be imposed as of August 1, 1984, which would be raised to a higher level on August 1, 1986. The scores would be raised again on August 1, 1989 when the standards were to go fully into effect.

As a result of these legislative mandates and administrative proceedings, the CLAST was first required of all colleges sophomores after the fall term of 1982. Until August of 1984, no minimum scores on the CLAST were required of students, but they were required to submit their scores on each of the four subtests in order to achieve full upper-division status. The minimum passing scores were raised, as proposed, in 1986, but various concerns prevented imposition of the final, highest standards in 1989.

The concerns were raised by community college presidents and some educators who felt the new minimum standards would adversely impact the completion rates of minority students if the higher standards were to go into effect. After a complete review of the situation, the State Board of Education modified the passing score requirements so that the higher levels would be implemented on schedule for the Reading and English Language Skills tests. The so-called 1989 levels in mathematics could be stretched out to 1991 by inserting an intermediate level. For the essay subtest, the 1986 passing score requirements were also extended to 1991.

Primary Purpose:

The foremost purposes of assessment activities are to (1) define and enforce minimum standards for all sectors and institutions in the state, and (2) to stimulate curricular attention and action at the institutional level.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

The College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) is required of all college sophomores in order to receive their associate of arts degrees or to attain upper-division status in the college or university. Also, for the past six years, the State Board of Education has compiled a report called "Indicators of Progress toward Excellence in Education" for all levels of education. For the postsecondary level, it includes follow-up studies of former students, licensure exam results, student/faculty

ratios, scores on standardized graduate school admission tests, such as the GRE, and similar data.

CLAST is administered several times per year at the local postsecondary institution by persons designated with that responsibility. Each institution pays the expenses associated with these test administrations. The Department of Education hires a test support agency to prepare the test copy, print and distribute the results, and score the answer sheets. Each institution is provided printed copies of all reports and a computer tape or diskette containing the student level data. In addition, the Department of Education maintains printed reports of test results, a data tape for each administration of CLAST, and an on-line, current history file of test results which can be accessed at each institution.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

In addition to serving as a "gateway" test that must be passed before progress can continue in school, the CLAST is also used to evaluate the college curricula both by the state and the institution.

In 1990, for the first time, the State Board of Education required each postsecondary institution to prepare and implement a plan describing how their instructional programs will be modified to help students, particularly minority students, meet the higher CLAST passing standards. These plans will be presented to the Commissioner of Education and the State Board.

Funding:

The 1989 Florida Legislature approved funds for a competitive grant program designed to enhance undergraduate education in public community colleges and state universities. Presidents of community colleges must submit proposals to the State Board of Community Colleges and presidents of the state universities must submit one to the state Board of Regents. The boards are to judge the merit of the proposals, based on a design of excellence in undergraduate instruction and career counseling. Preference is to be given to innovative programs that enhance the student advisement process, including courses providing orientation towards academic and career experience, and student mentor programs. As of March 1, 1991, each institution is also required to report to its board on the effectiveness of this program.

The legislature gave $2.8 million to the state universities, and $3 million to the community colleges to implement the enhancement grant program.

The CLAST activities are funded annually by the Legislature through general revenue funds. Private school students who are tested with CLAST as an optional service pay a fee of $10 per test administration. The legislative appropriation is sufficient to pay for test development and administration costs. The CLAST appropriation request for 1990-91 is $1,226,000.

Comments:

Assessment and related issues are expect to stay the same in relative importance in the coming year or two.

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GEORGIA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

There is no legislative mandate nor board policy on assessment of learning outcomes, although interest is strong. The state does, however, have a systemwide testing program of entering students, and a required sophomore-level test that must be passed prior to graduation.

Description of the Initiative:

The Chancellor of the University System of Georgia has expressed strong support and encouragement for assessment of learning outcomes. To this end, the system has conducted a number of statewide assessment workshops, and established an overall advisory committee and three task forces under a consortium of institutions to study possible procedures and implementation. Academic committees are also addressing assessment in the major.

The system has had mandated basic skills testing since 1975. Currently, entering students who do not score 350 or above on either the verbal or analytical section of the Scholastic Aptitude Test are required to take the Collegiate Placement Examination (CPE). If the results of the CPE verify a need for remediation, students are placed into developmental courses. There are three parts to the CPE -- reading, mathematics and English -- and students must pass all three parts within their first four quarters of college study.

All students in the Georgia system are required to take the Regents' Test in their sophomore year which measures writing ability and reading comprehension. Both parts of the test must be passed prior to graduation, although failure to pass the test by the end of the sophomore year won't prevent students from enrolling in upper-division courses. However, students who have accumulated 75 quarter credit hours (normally, the credit acquired by final-semester sophomores) and who have not passed the test, then they must enroll in remedial coursework in addition to any other courses they may take.

Passage of the Regents' Test is also required for graduation for students enrolled in two-year academic programs leading to an associate of science degree.

The Regents' Test emerged out of concerns raised in the late '60s which parallel many of the issues surrounding the current assessment movement. The need for a core curriculum and to assess achievement was posed in the late '60s by the chancellor of the system at that time. A number of committees and groups reviewed possible testing and assessment methods. Pilot tests were also administered in 1968-69 with the administration of CLEP tests in three core areas -- humanities, social sciences and mathematics/science. As a result of this research and pilot testing, the difficulty of measuring outcomes became fully apparent. In an effort to keep the process reasonably simple, the chancellor ultimately recommended testing be limited to writing and reading comprehension.

The Board of Regents accepted this recommendation, and pilot testing of the examination instrument took place in the 1970-71 school year. Passage of the Regents' Test became a graduation requirement for students who were "rising juniors" in 1972 and those coming after them.

For more information about the Regents' Test, contact Kathleen Burk, Director, Regents Testing Program, Georgia State University, Atlanta, Georgia 30303, 404-651-4240.

Notably, the current discussion on assessment in Georgia is not focused on standardized testing, nor an expansion of the Regents' testing. Assessment is a local and institutional concern based upon the curricular goals of the various campuses and programs within the system.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of the current assessment movement in Georgia is the statewide improvement of undergraduate education.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

Results of both the basic skills and the Regents' tests are maintained by the system, but are not used for purposes of curriculum evaluation, except by individual institutions.

The university also has a systemwide Student Information Reporting System (SIRS) that creates a database from various elements reported by the institutions. From this database an annual report is produced which shows retention rates of students, and graduation rates by institution and by level of degree achieved, i.e. bachelors, associate, masters, doctorate, professional.

Other data which is reported includes rates of transfer, information on placement of students within the curriculum, and the academic progression of students.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

Policies formulated by the system Board of Regents must be followed, but neither assessment nor the testing program requires any kind of approval on an ongoing basis.

Comments:

Assessment is expected to increase in importance due to the involvement of the overall assessment steering committee, three task forces and study on assessment in the major through academic committees.

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HAWAII

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The legislature reauthorized legislation (Act 371) in June 1989 that required the University of Hawaii to assess its effectiveness along with granting the University of Hawaii greater autonomy in certain fiscal and administrative matters. The original legislation on institutional effectiveness was passed in 1986.

Description of the Initiative:

The legislative mandate for assessment of institutional effective is reinforced by a policy adopted by the University Board of Regents in January 1989, and an executive policy of the university administration adopted in July 1989. The specifics of assessment as it is to be conducted within the institution are framed largely in the administrative policy. It provides, in part:

- Assessment is to be used generally to gather evidence in a regular and systematic way about the effectiveness of programs, campuses and the University system as a whole.

- A basic principle of the University's assessment initiative is the measurement of its achievement in three areas: (a) research and educational programming; (b) internal organizational and administrative functions; and (c) satisfying state needs and objectives.

- Each campus of the University is to establish its own assessment plan and develop procedures for gathering and reporting assessment information.

- Each campus is to prepare an annual summary report on assessment activities and submit it to the President's Office by July 15 of each year.

- In addition, each University campus is to provide the state Department of Education with data on the initial class placement and first-year academic performance of recent public high school graduates in Hawaii.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of the state's assessment initiative is to stimulate curricular action and attention at the institutional level.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

Assessment programs are campus-based and incorporated into the program review process. No statewide testing or uniform measures of student performance are currently in use.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

Each campus of the University of Hawaii prepares plans but there is no requirement for formal approval from either the Board of Regents nor the system administration. Assessment results are to be used in existing processes of planning, budgeting, program review and accreditation.

Funding:

Assessment activities are funded through the university's current service appropriations.

Comments:

It is clear that the public, through its elected representatives, increasingly wants evidence that their investment in higher education is reaping significant societal benefits.

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IDAHO

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

Policies and procedures for outcomes assessment were prepared by the staff of the Idaho Board of Regents, a statewide governing board, and adopted by the board members in September 1988. They apply to all public postsecondary institutions in the state.

Description of the Initiative:

The policy outlines three areas where institutions are to concentrate their assessment efforts: (1) assessment of programs by students; (2) assessment of student learning by departmental major; and (3) assessment of student learning in general education. The institutions are to develop their own assessment techniques, but should not rely on just one test. Use of multiple measures is encouraged.

For the year 1988-89, the policy mandated the development of a campus assessment committee at each institution. These committees were to study current campus assessment practices in light of the implications assessment is posing on a national basis. The institutions were to report to the Board on the development of their initial Assessment Inventory and Assessment Plan in June 1989.

In 1989-90, the institutions are to develop assessment procedures to evaluate student learning within the departmental major. The institutions are scheduled to report to the Board on these Departmental Assessment Plans in June 1990. The following year they are to focus on general education, and report on their General Education Assessment Plans in June 1991.

In 1991 and 1992, the institutions are to develop evaluation plans of these assessment procedures. They are to give a progress report on departmental assessment in June 1992, and a progress report on general education assessment in June 1993. Thereafter, assessment procedures will come up to the board for annual review.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of assessment in Idaho is to "enhance the quality and excellence of programs, learning, and teaching."

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

No common testing instruments are in use, nor common data collected. Institutions are encouraged to develop their own assessment procedures consistent with their role and mission, and in recognition of the diversity of their students.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

The institutions are to report annually on the development and implementation of assessment to the Board of Education in June.

Funding:

The State Board of Education has asked for specified funding for assessment within the individual institutional budget requests.

Comments:

As the effects of the newly-enacted student assessment policy become better known, the information that is generated is expected to shape the program-review process, enhance faculty development, and help shape institutional goals and mission statements.

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ILLINOIS

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The Illinois Board of Higher Education adopted a series of policies designed to improve undergraduate education, especially "student achievement, scholarship and general education" in September 1986. These policies, as recommended by the Board's Committee on the Study of Undergraduate Education, are currently being expanded, with a target date for completion of July 1990.

Description of the Initiative:

These policies on undergraduate education call for colleges and universities to define their objectives for general education and the development of baccalaureate level skills within baccalaureate (and baccalaureate-transfer) degree programs, to communicate them to students, to assess individual student progress in meeting them, and to conduct regular reviews of the undergraduate educational experience. Colleges and universities are to collect data on the progress, retention and completion of all undergraduate students as a basis for the regular review and improvement of the undergraduate curriculum and supporting services.

Individual institutions have developed a variety of assessment activities, including "rising-junior" writing proficiency examinations, team-graded common course final examinations and general education field examinations, proficiency tests in quantitative reasoning, and senior-year capstone seminars or other experiences, as well as commercially available tests to assess students' learning in general education.

Primary Purpose:

The major purpose of the Board's policies is the improvement of undergraduate education statewide. The primary purpose of assessment is to measure student progress in meeting learning objectives in order to provide the guidance appropriate to assure success.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

The assessment process and techniques were developed individually by each institution and, therefore, differ from institution to institution. Entry cohort retention and completion information is collected and published for public universities by the Board of Higher Education. Plans are underway to incorporate nonpublic institutions into this system, as well as to establish a comparable system to monitor the after-transfer success of cohorts of students who transfer from associate to baccalaureate degree-granting institutions.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

Public universities and community colleges are required to submit annual reports on their reviews of undergraduate education (including assessment results) to the Board of Higher Education. The initial reports were received in July 1989, with an analysis of these first reports published in November 1989.

Funding:

No funding has been specifically targeted to assessment. Public universities received incremental funding in their base budgets in fiscal years 1989 and 1990 to support various improvements in undergraduate education, including assessment initiatives and the development of systems for monitoring student progress.

Comments:

It is expected that the reviews of the undergraduate education experience and the monitoring of student progress will increase in importance in the next few years.

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INDIANA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

Interest in assessing undergraduate education has come from many sources: the executive and legislative branches of state government, higher education institutions, and the Indiana Commission for Higher Education.

Description of the Initiative:

For the period 1987-89, Indiana established, as a state-level performance objective, the development of measures of undergraduate learning. Institutions included requests for funds to address this topic as part of their biennial budget requests and reported on approaches institutions had taken to developing these measures.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purposes for this initiative are as follows: improve undergraduate education, stimulate curricular action and attention to this topic at the institutional level, and to publicly demonstrate the effectiveness of higher education to state-level constituencies and the general public.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

No.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

No.

Comments:

The development of measures of undergraduate assessment is no longer a state-level performance objective: it now is regarded as more appropriately within the purview of institutional responsibilities.

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IOWA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

While not generally an issue of wide concern among policy makers, interest in assessment has been generated by the staff of the Iowa Board of Regents.

Description of the Initiative:

There is no current assessment mandate in place. The staff of the Board of Regents is engaged in a study on indicators of student outcomes assessment.

Primary Purpose:

The chief purpose of assessment activities in the state is to stimulate curricular action and attention at the institutional level.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

There are no statewide assessment initiatives in place, and therefore no uniform systems of collecting assessment data.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

No assessment plans from individual institutions are required at the present time.

Funding:

Institutions are responsible for funding any assessment activities they undertake from their own resources.

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KANSAS

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The staff and members of the Kansas Board of Regents have been the primary initiators of assessment in the state by developing and approving a format in October 1988 that institutions are to follow to create their own assessment design and activities.

Description of the Initiative:

Based on the format approved by the Board of Regents, all public colleges and universities in the state have created their own assessment plan based on that institution's particular role and mission. The institutional plans were approved by the Board of Regents in January 1989. The plans are currently being implemented over a three-year time frame. While segments of institutional assessments are being phased in, all plans are currently operational.

According to the format, the plans had to create and identify expectations for baccalaureate degree students in three areas: basic skills, general education, and the major field of study. The plans had to further show how institutions would measure attainment of these expectations.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of assessment in the state is to demonstrate publicly the effectiveness of higher education to the legislature and the public, and to stimulate appropriate educational reforms.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

Assessment is being conducted at the institutional level. There is no statewide mandate requiring uniform testing and data collection.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

A schedule for reporting development and implementation of assessment activities was included in each institutional plan submitted to the Board of Regents.

Funding:

Institutions are funding assessment activities with current appropriations.

Comments:

Interest in assessment is expected to increase as progress reports from the institutions are submitted to the Board. Performance funding is also being studied as another initiative to strengthen colleges and universities.

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KENTUCKY

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

Institutions in the state are the primary initiators of assessment activities based on their desire to meet the standard for regional accreditation required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). In addition, the 1990 General Assembly approved funding for an Accountability Enhancement Program to be coordinated by the Kentucky Council on Higher Education.

Description of the Initiative:

Implementation of the Accountability Enhancement Program will be a three-phase process. In Phase I, funds will be used to compile an information base of assessment strategies employed by institutions locally and nationally. Multiple strategies will be considered including student follow-up surveys, "rising juniors" assessments, value added from general education and from education in a major field, graduate placement outcomes, and employer satisfaction surveys and others.

In Phase II the Council will work in conjunction with the institutions to begin developing selected programs. During this phase, collaborative decisions will be made concerning relevant institutional sites at which to pilot test various assessment programs to determine their appropriateness for potential implementation at other Kentucky institutions.

In Phase III, appropriate measures of program effectiveness will be implemented on the campuses. While this program is conceived of in three phases, it will be developed with an ongoing process in mind. Reports on institutional effectiveness should be published periodically and evaluation measures should be routinely fine-tuned with new or improved measures being shared among the institutions.

Primary Purpose:

The major purpose of the Accountability Enhancement Program is to establish a systemwide view of its effectiveness. This is consistent with the SACS standard to assess the effectiveness of individual institutions. The program has been funded in an effort to coordinate the systemwide accountability efforts and improve the system's ability to document its effectiveness. The intention is to design programs whereby institutions' progress are measured against themselves rather than comparing one institution to another.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

Currently, institutions design and implement their own assessment activities. However, revisions to the current program review process are considering a greater focus on assessing the quality of degree programs. Consistent criteria will be applied across all institutions, although it is anticipated that every degree program may not be subject to the same criteria.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

Because the Accountability Enhancement Program is brand new, reporting or approval procedures have not yet been considered. However, as noted above, qualitative measures of effectiveness will be incorporated into the program review process.

Funding:

Assessment activities undertaken by the institutions are funded out of current appropriations. The Council on Higher Education has received funds to begin developing the Accountability Enhancement Program in cooperation with the institutions. These funds are budgeted for staffing, data collection, consultations, and selected implementation of pilot programs where feasible.

Comments:

The Council on Higher Education has placed significant emphasis on systemwide as well as institutional planning efforts. Within that context the Accountability Enhancement Program will serve to coordinate a systemwide effort in measuring and documenting the effectiveness of the system of higher education.

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LOUISIANA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

Through a mandate adopted by the Louisiana Board of Regents, the board staff initiated an assessment policy in the state, and the governor, along with board members, have been major advocates of the effort.

Description of the Initiative:

The Louisiana Board of Regents adopted statewide general education requirements on April 24, 1986. These requirements include basic proficiency testing in mathematics and English, and each institution must "employ an appropriate testing procedure" to assess the effectiveness of the college experience. The Board left the decision to the individual institutions as to which types of testing instruments to use, but scheduled reviews during 1992-93 to assess the institutions' performance.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of the assessment initiative is statewide improvement of undergraduate education.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

The state's assessment initiative does not require common statewide tests of all students, but allows institutions to design their own procedures.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

Institutions are not required to report regularly to the Board regarding development of the assessment initiative, but in 1992-93 there will be an overall statewide review of the 1986 general education requirements.

Funding:

The assessment activities undertaken by the institutions are funded with current appropriations.

Comments:

It is expected that assessment will continue to gain in importance in the state, and the staff of the Board of Regents is expected to further develop assessment as an avenue to improve undergraduate instruction once political and financial conditions permit. Already, an awareness of assessment has led the board to pose more rigorous questions regarding "outcomes" during review of both proposed and existing programs at the institutions.

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MAINE

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The Chancellor of the University of Maine System is the primary initiator and developer of assessment activities in the state. Assessment was made a goal and priority when Chancellor Robert M. Woodbury came on board in 1986.

Description of the Initiative:

Initially, shortly after taking office in 1986, Woodbury asked the Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs to convene a systemwide Assessment Committee to begin to focus institutional efforts on improvement of teaching and learning. In a planning process involving study of assessment efforts in other states, a group of individuals representing all campuses in the system attended the AAHE assessment forum in Denver in 1987. Within the state, the assessment committee also conducted a conference on Assessment with a broad range of attendance from all campuses of the system. It was held in November 1988 and was devoted entirely to student outcomes assessment. Out of these planning efforts, four major principles emerged to guide the development of the state's assessment initiative. They are:

- Assessment is much more than giving standardized tests.
- Each campus in the system has a unique mission so therefore the best assessment program for the campus will be one developed to reflect the mission of that particular campus.
- The most effective assessment is linked to teaching and learning in ways that will improve teaching and learning.
- The most effective assessment is supported and developed by faculty and viewed by faculty as a way to improve the learning process.

The planning efforts in regard to assessment were underwritten in part by a pool of funds made available for the years 1988, 1989 and 1990 out of the Vice Chancellor's budget. The funds covered the costs of four pilot assessment projects at the Farmington campus, and a summer project in computer science at the Orono campus, and planning efforts on the Fort Kent campus.

With the completion of the planning phase, the campuses have begun to implement their individual assessment procedures. While each institution has created its own process, they share several elements in common to assessment plans that are operational elsewhere in the country. The activities Maine campuses have chosen include student portfolios, capstone exams in the major, surveys of students and alumni, developmental courses, and the development of a Learning Center on one campus as a focus for assessment efforts.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of the assessment initiative in Maine is the statewide improvement of undergraduate education.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

Assessment activities in Maine are conducted by the institutions, and so there are no common testing methods nor central office for the collection of data.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

Assessment has been incorporated into planning goals for the University of Maine system, and into campus goals as well. The governing board endorses the system goals and reviews the campus goals. But, aside from these limited oversight functions, no outside approval or reporting is required.

Funding:

The campuses of the University of Maine have a general annual appropriation from which they are expected to fund their assessment activities. In addition, $35,000 was set aside annually in 1988, 1989 and 1990 from the Vice Chancellor's budget to provide incentives for the development of assessment initiatives. The funds covered four pilot projects on the Farmington campus, salary costs for a summer project in computer science on the Orono campus, and planning efforts on the Fort Kent campus.

Comments:

It is expected that assessment activities on the campuses will become more widespread now that the planning and pilot projects have been implemented. Assessment is generally viewed as an effective mechanism to further the state's academic agenda towards the improvement of undergraduate teaching and learning.

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MARYLAND

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The governor and legislature of the state initiated assessment with the passage in 1988 of Sec. 11-304 to 308 of the Maryland state code that mandates the development and implementation of institutional accountability plans. With the passage of the legislation, most involved now in its implementation are members of the institutions and the members of the Maryland Commission on Higher Education.

Description of the Initiative:

According to the legislation, accountability plans are to be developed by the president of each public postsecondary institution and submitted to the institutional governing board. These boards are to review and approve the plans, which are then to be submitted to the Maryland Commission on Higher Education.

The performance accountability plans are to be developed according to the institution's role and mission, are to follow the Commission's approved guidelines and format, and are to include multiyear studies with "quantifiable indices" of student academic performance, and graduation and retention rates. The plans are also to incorporate provisions for institutional improvement based on findings from the accountability reports.

The Commission may disapprove a plan and require the governing board to reconsider the plan (1) if it does not conform to the format and guidelines established by the Commission; (2) if measurement techniques are invalid or unreliable; or (3) if the plan is not reasonable related to the institution's mission statement.

Based on the approved accountability performance plans, the institutions are to develop annual accountability reports, which are to be submitted to the Commission. After compiling and reviewing the reports, the Commission is to comment on them and make its own recommendations to the Governor and the legislature.

The guidelines for accountability are to be generated following a review and revision of campus mission statements, and approval of a new statewide plan. The campus mission statements are to be finalized in May 1990, with approval of the master plan and accountability guidelines to be addressed thereafter.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of the state's assessment initiative is to publicly demonstrate the effectiveness of higher education to the legislature and the general public.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

While measures of assessment surrounding the new accountability plans are still in the developmental stages, the state has collected and reported information concerning retention and graduation rates of students for a number of years. The reports compile a number of indicators concerning outcomes of students, such as rates of indebtedness of graduates; employment, unemployment and underemployment, the relationship of an individual's occupation with the graduate's major, and the rating graduates give their alma mater for the preparation it gave them for their current occupation. One of the Commission's reports tracks entering students of community colleges and their status three years later, including completion rates and percent who transfer to four-year colleges or universities.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

By legislation, the performance accountability plans are to be approved by the individual institutional governing boards and the Commission on Higher Education before they are forwarded to the governor.

Funding:

The performance accountability measure was part of a reorganization measure that included significant base funding increases for higher education. These increases are expected to cover the costs of developing and implementing the accountability plan.

Comments:

Assessment and accountability are also seen as ways to stimulate curricular action and attention at the institutional level. Because of the interest in this area, it is expected that the importance of accountability and assessment will increase in importance in the coming year or two.

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MASSACHUSETTS

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

Chancellor Franklyn Jenifer of the Massachusetts Board of Regents sparked an interest in assessment as a tool to improve undergraduate teaching and learning when he issued a charge in his annual message of November 1987 to affirm the commitment to the quality of undergraduate education in the state's public colleges and universities, and to identify steps to strengthen and enhance the undergraduate experience.

Description of the Initiative:

In response to the Chancellor's mandate, the state Board of Regents issued a report in June 1989 entitled The Undergraduate Experience which outlined 44 recommendations designed to improve teaching and learning. Assessment figures prominently in this effort. Chief among the recommendations in this area are: (1) mandatory assessment of the basic skills of incoming students; (2) required developmental instruction for those students showing deficiencies; and (3) required post assessment for all students who are placed in developmental instruction. Several other recommendations allude to assessment to heighten the learning experience, and suggest ways it could be incorporated into the curriculum.

To implement the basic skills assessment initiatives, a statewide group has been assembled to evaluate the current testing methods employed by the state's colleges and universities, and to issue guidelines on their use based on the academic objectives of the board's report. During 1990-91, it is expected the basic skills entry-level assessment program will be piloted at the public postsecondary institutions in accordance with the established guidelines.

Until the release of this report, the state had no articulated policies concerning assessment. However, in the course of producing the report, some activities related to assessment were identified. They include:

- Students at one Massachusetts public university must pass a writing proficiency examination prior to their junior year.
- Another institution requires students to demonstrate competence in four areas prior to graduation.
- A state college has adapted Supplemental Instruction as a tool for modifying how courses are taught.
- Most public institutions assess at least two of the principle basic skill areas (reading, mathematics, and writing). A mixture of standardized and institutionally-developed instruments are utilized with the results used primarily to advise students about appropriate course placement.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of the state's assessment initiative is the improvement of undergraduate education in the public postsecondary institutions.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

While use of common instruments is not mandated, The Undergraduate Experience recommends that the measurement of entry-level assessment of basic skills and subsequent post-assessment be comparable and compatible within the public postsecondary system. Other information collected statewide includes statistics on degrees conferred and the SAT scores of students. It is also envisioned that the current student record system will be used to develop common retention measures for each of the three segments of the public postsecondary system.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

The current expectation is that institutions are to comply with the recommendations of The Undergraduate Experience according to the schedule that has been developed as part of the implementation plan for the report's recommendations.

Funding:

Due to the state's current fiscal situation, no additional funding has been available to institutions for implementation of assessment activities. Institutions are expected to reallocate resources as necessary.

Comments:

Consensus in the state, as evident in The Undergraduate Experience, is that assessment is critical to the success of the educational process. Furthermore, in addition to the report's recommendations, the board is exploring the feasibility of an initiative for a systemwide outcomes assessment.

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MICHIGAN

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The universities in Michigan operate very autonomously with their own elected boards. A teacher education initiative passed in 1986 by the legislature (PA 286) is the only kind of statewide initiative that resembles an assessment mandate.

Description of the Initiative:

University autonomy has strong historical roots in the state and was reaffirmed in a court ruling about 10 years ago that overturned a legislative attempt to prevent a new university program from being established.

The teacher education initiative is scheduled to go into effect in September 1991. It will require teacher education graduates to pass at least two tests in order to get their certification -- one in the area of basic education skills, and a second in the specific subject area in which they plan to teach. If they plan to teach in more than one subject area, they will have to pass a test for each subject. Traditionally, teachers have not had to pass state certification tests in Michigan; they have become certified based upon the recommendation of their schools.

Primary Purpose:

The rationale for the teacher education initiative was to "define and enforce minimum standards" which grew out of some concern of teachers' alleged lack of preparedness in subject areas assigned to them.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

Institutions will be able to devise their own teacher education tests based upon the state mandate. The scores and other data resulting from the test will be maintained within the institution.

In addition, the legislature established a Minority Equity Office in 1986 which has begun to collect some enrollment and retention statistics as they pertain to minorities.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

The state must approve the teacher test design that is developed by the institution. The state will also have some involvement in the teacher education curricula to ensure teachers are proficient in the subject areas in which they intend to be certified.

Funding:

The governing boards of colleges and universities receive a general appropriation; there is no line-item budgeting nor reporting to the legislature or any other state agency. As a result, the schools fund and spend their appropriations as they see fit.

Comments:

The state is also doing a study on transfer rates from two-year to four-year schools which may indirectly lend itself to some interest in teaching and learning issues by creating some discussion as to what the curricular needs are at the undergraduate level.

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MINNESOTA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The state legislature was the chief initiator of assessment activities in the state with the passage in 1987 of a bill establishing a Task Force on Post-Secondary Quality Assessment. The task force was directed to study the objectives of assessment and how it can be used to improve postsecondary education. The task force was also charged with establishing a pilot assessment program within each of the public postsecondary systems in the state.

Description of the Initiative:

As created, the task force is a diverse group composed of faculty, students, and administrators from each of the public and private postsecondary education systems, and included secondary school representatives as well. During the 1987-89 biennium, the task force was charged with issuing a progress report in 1988, and a final report in 1989.

Initially, to gain more information about ongoing assessment efforts, a survey was conducted involving 33 institutions in the state: three campuses of the University of Minnesota; all seven of the state universities; five of the 18 community colleges; five technical institutes; 10 private colleges, and three proprietary schools. As a result of this survey, a Directory of Selected Assessment Activities was prepared and published by the Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board. Copies are available from the Board.

The task force recommended advancement of assessment through funding of pilot projects. The 1988 legislature granted $100,000 for this activity. From a submission of 13 proposals from the institutions, the task force recommended eight for funding.

Funding:

The task force originally asked for $1.12 million for the 1990-91 biennium to fund the pilot projects. The legislature appropriated $300,000 directly to fund the pilot projects and the Minnesota Higher Education Coordinating Board provided an additional $200,000. Another $400,000 in internal campus or system funds was added to provide a total of $900,000 in for the biennium for the pilot projects. The six pilots funded are:

- An assessment of the impact of baccalaureate education on students' critical thinking abilities at the University of Minnesota's Duluth, Morris and Twin Cities campuses.

- An expansion of an existing assessment program at Bemidji State University using standardized instruments, student focus groups, special-purpose assessments and the addition of a measurement specialist to assist faculty.

- An integration of two evaluation procedures -- student skills and quality of instruction -- into a computerized management information system at the Technical College of Hutchinson.

- A project at Saint Olaf College with three components: departmentally-based assessment of student writing ability, using portfolios; cross-cultural global awareness assessment; and assessment of general student learning outcomes over four years.

- Expansion of an assessment program initiated at North Hennepin Community College to other community colleges in the state. The program includes five components: assessment for placement analysis of student intent, student learning (both general education and in the major), surveys of graduates, and an ethnographic study tracking a sample of students throughout their college experience.

- Development of a system to gather information about program completion, job placement, and earnings at 30 career schools, sponsored by the Minnesota Association of Private Postsecondary Schools.

In addition to funding the six pilot programs, the 1989 legislature re-authorized the task force through June 1991 (it was scheduled to sunset in June 1989). The six pilot projects were funded on a two-year cycle which also continues through 1991.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of assessment established by the task force is to improve teaching and learning and secondarily, to provide accountability to student, citizens, and policy makers.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

Assessment in Minnesota is based at the institutions. There is no state level collection nor reporting of assessment results.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

The pilot projects on assessment were funded through a process of application and grant awards through the state task force. A report from each pilot as well as an external evaluation will be presented to the Coordinating Board and the legislature in 1991.

Comments:

With rates for high school graduation (90%) and postsecondary matriculation that are already high (87% entering postsecondary school within six years of graduation), the state is likely to focus more on the quality of education than issues of access. Defining and measuring the quality of postsecondary education and the role of

assessment are likely to be topics for future discussion among educators and policy makers.

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MISSISSIPPI

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

In legislation initiated by the governor, the legislature directed the State Board of Trustees of Institutions of Higher Learning to develop and implement specified accountability measures.

Description of the Initiative:

The accountability measures mandated by the legislature are to be specifically aimed at improving and measuring performance of the institutions under the jurisdiction of the Board of Trustees. The legislation will take effect July 1, 1990, provided that the legislature declares, through legislation adopted by both the House and the Senate prior to July 1, that sufficient funds are dedicated and available.

Currently, the staff of the Board of Trustees is reviewing a report from a systemwide Task Force on Institutional Effectiveness that contains a number of recommendations relating to accountability and assessment.

In addition, all campuses governed by the Board of Trustees have ongoing assessment programs that are strongly supported by the chief executive officers of their institutions.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of the state's assessment initiative is to publicly demonstrate the effectiveness of higher education to the legislature and the general public.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

The accountability legislation, with implementation contingent upon sufficient funding, contains a mandate for a "rising junior" exam. The report from the systemwide Task Force on Institutional Effectiveness also includes a recommendations for a "rising junior" exam. The exam, as proposed in the Task Force report, will be taken at the end of a student's sophomore year. If students do not pass the exam, they will be required to take developmental coursework.

The accountability legislation, with implementation contingent upon sufficient funding, also directs the Board of Trustees to measure job placement, job retention and wage rates of recent graduates and non-graduating students within the higher education system, and publish these results. It further requires the comparison of university graduates from Mississippi with graduates from other states, based on such measures as the GRE, the LSAT, the GMAT, the NTE, and the MCAT. Results of these comparisons are also to be published, according to the legislation.

Currently, through a student unit record system, other common kinds of student retention data are collected in the state, but only for senior institutions.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

The proposal on institutional effectiveness would require an annual progress report from institutions.

Funding:

The accountability mandate from the legislature is tied to a funding bill that provides $1.5 million to implement it over a three-year period. The funding bill is being considered in a special session of the legislature in the spring of 1990.

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MISSOURI

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

While assessment is not new to Missouri, it was adopted statewide by the public postsecondary institutions in 1986 with the development of a complete range of assessment activities. The interest in assessment was generated by Governor John Ashcroft who challenged higher education to improve student academic performance, and to use assessment as a means of doing so.

Description of the Initiative:

Following the governor's challenge and mandate to higher education, the institutions each developed a set of assessment activities consistent with their own role and mission. These plans were in place and implementation began in the 1987-88 fiscal year. The state Coordinating Board is now monitoring the assessment activities the schools have underway, and furthering the assessment process with the development of indicators designed to show the progress and outcomes of both students and graduates.

A total of 33 indicators have been suggested by the Coordinating Board, many of which are now being collected by the schools. With a common set of indicators, it is anticipated that the data and results can be used to improve the teaching and learning environment in Missouri schools, and provide information to make curricular and program improvements where the data indicates it's necessary.

One of the state's public institution -- Northeast Missouri State University -- was a pioneer in assessment which began gradually in 1973. A liberal arts college, NMSU sought to improve the quality of teaching and learning on its campus by focusing on outcomes. The architect and leading proponent of the school's assessment approach was its former president, Charles J. McClain. Recently, McClain left the position of presidency to become the Commissioner of the statewide Coordinating Board.

Primary Purpose:

The major purpose of Missouri's assessment initiative is the statewide improvement of undergraduate education.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

While the schools use indicators to assess student performance, and common indicators are being formulated, as noted above, there currently is no statewide collection and compilation of these assessment results. Missouri, however, is also conducting a special study known as the "Student Achievement Study" with ACT that will eventually provide a rich resource of data on student retention, degree completion, background of students, and factors that contribute to success in college. While the Student Achievement Study pre-dated the governor's assessment initiative, it has since evolved to become fully integrated with it.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

Institutions are required to report annually to the state Coordinating Board on Higher Education for review of their assessment efforts, but otherwise there is no formal approval required of institutional assessment plans.

Funding:

Generally, institutions are expected to fund assessment efforts from a reallocation of their current resources and appropriations. No new funding was awarded for assessment activities.

Comments:

It is anticipated that there will be a review of institutional assessment plans by the state board in a year or two in order to study the success of the implementation.

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MONTANA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The postsecondary institutions have taken the initiative in discussions on assessment in the state, although no major initiatives have been generated as yet.

Description of the Initiative:

No specific program or project exists at this point, although discussions will be taking place later this year as to the direction assessment may take, and the procedures it will involve. As a whole, assessment is expected to increase in importance in the coming year or two.

Primary Purpose:

The major purpose of assessment in the state would be to publicly demonstrate the effectiveness of higher education to the legislature and the public.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

There is no common testing nor collection of performance indicators related to assessment at this point.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

As the institutions are initiating discussions of assessment on their own, there is no state-level approval or reporting of assessment plans required.

Funding:

There is no special funding commitment for assessment at this point other than what the institutions may decide to set aside for this purpose from existing resources.

Comments:

Assessment may fit into a major initiative in the state to educate the populace as to the overall importance of higher education towards improving Montana's economy and general well being.

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NEBRASKA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

There currently are no state-level, higher education mandates in the area of assessment.

Description of the Initiative:

Institutions have taken the responsibility for improving undergraduate instruction.

Primary Purpose:

Since there is no statewide initiative in assessment, there is no general, statewide purpose for assessment that has been articulated.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

There is no statewide testing or data collection of student outcomes related to assessment in Nebraska.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

Institutions are not required to report to the state about any kind of assessment activities.

Funding:

There is no specific funding for assessment activities in public higher education.

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NEVADA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The Board of Regents of the University of Nevada System initiated assessment by adopting a policy in 1989 that requires each campus to develop a plan of regular student educational assessment and submit it to the board by the spring of 1990.

Description of the Initiative:

According to the policy, each campus is to assume responsibility for developing the assessment processes and procedures to be used. Plans are to be based upon campus mission and involve multiple assessment approaches. The policy also provides that plans are to reflect the mix of programs and types of students at each school.

While assessment approaches may vary among institutions, the universities and community colleges are to work together to develop common approaches, where appropriate.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of assessment in the state is to stimulate curricular action and attention at the institutional level.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

The board policy provides that the Chancellor's office, with the campuses, will develop appropriate measures of student persistence and performance, and will collect and monitor these data on a statewide basis.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

After the initial reports on campus assessment efforts are submitted in the spring of 1990, the presidents of each campus are to report to the Board on the results of their assessment efforts on a biennial basis.

Nevada campuses also address assessment requirements of their accrediting association (Northwest) during regular self-study and visitation activities.

Funding:

Campuses are expected to fund assessment efforts with existing resources and current appropriations. No special funding particularly for assessment has been granted.

Comments:

In addition to the usual purposes of assessment for determining learning outcomes, student retention and satisfaction, etc., Nevada's policy also expects institutions to assess employer satisfaction with their graduates, where feasible.

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NEW HAMPSHIRE

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The Board of Trustees of the University System of New Hampshire adopted assessment of student learning as one of four system goals in June 1988. Since that time, the institutions and the board staff have completed an inventory of assessment techniques, and are involved in the development of assessment policy.

Description of the Initiative:

The goal, as adopted by the Board of Trustees, states:

> Our student learning assessment goal is directed toward having the campuses initiate, identify or develop new ways to assess student learning which, in turn, will produce recommendations for improvement in academic programs and will underscore the primary importance of instructional excellence throughout the university system.

Based on this directive, the University System administration approached undergraduate assessment as a re-examination of what the institutions have been doing in terms of measuring learning outcomes in both general education and departmental majors. To this end, the system administration worked with the institutions to produce inventories of assessment techniques that are currently in use. The inventory of assessment techniques determined the commonalities among the various instruments in use and reported on each of them according to a common format.

Analysis of the inventory showed that:

- All the institutions conduct considerable varieties of assessments of outcomes, that those assessments are conducted with defined frequencies, and that the results are put to specific, short-term, useful ends. (Little is available in terms of longitudinal data, or in terms of validity or reliability of data.)

- All the institutions carry out assessments of incoming students' mathematic and verbal skills, therefore not relying unduly on SAT scores and/or students' high school records for freshman placement; all four institutions monitor the development of students' writing skills, critical thinking abilities and quantitative abilities throughout the undergraduate experience; and all the institutions are actively testing and adding new measures in areas where there were previously fewer documentation of outcomes.

- All four institutions consider use of multiple and varied measures more desirable than heavy reliance upon standardized exams; although each campus also administers standardized tests in certain areas of study, and maintains norms and comparisons in systematic ways.

Examination of each institution in particular showed that:

- UNH's outcomes-assessments focus the most strongly on measures outside the faculty and the departments associated with programs. Accreditation reviews, surveys of graduate school admissions, records of job placements, and such measures as internship supervisors' evaluations figure prominently in the array of assessments presented in the University's compendium. It is largely from the results of such external measures that the UNJ departments and faculty determine how well students perform, and what they know at the completion of the respective programs of study.

- The state colleges' outcome assessments mainly focus on assessments conducted by faculties of programs and departments, and are therefore relatively more internal to the institutions than those of the university.

- The School for Lifelong Learning's focus in assessment relies heavily on student-faculty interaction in individual/small group assessment of variously delivered instruction. SLL's outcomes assessment are the most student-oriented in the system.

In general, assessment is viewed as a tool to evaluate student achievement, and assess program and institutional effectiveness. The report's conclusions centered on the necessity for the institutions to conduct specific outcomes assessments of programs and services that further the missions and goals of the institutions.

It was subsequently determined that the next few months' work with assessment of outcomes will occur in undergraduate general education. The institutions have both strong commitment to, and high expectations for, their undergraduate education courses, and they seek now to document that curricula's instructional quality as well as the learning that takes place.

Campuses are also examining their methodologies and expectations in regard to outcomes assessments, and will be focusing increasingly on the use and validity of those outcomes.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of the university's assessment initiative is program improvement.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

There is no state mandate to collect data on assessment, but the institutions and various university programs are aware of the variety of instruments used to ascertain students preparedness, student satisfaction and alumni placement. Other measures of student progress commonly referenced include college-going rates for high school students, number of degrees awarded, etc.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

The strategic plans for each institution are expected to address assessment as it is one of four policy goals that the Board of Trustees adopted in June 1988. These strategic plans must be approved by the Trustees. It is also expected that progress and development in the area of assessment will be reported to the Trustees on an annual basis.

Funding:

Assessment activities are being funded through the institutions' own resources and annual appropriations, with some additional support from the System Innovation and Opportunities Grants Program.

Comments:

Assessment is expected to increase in importance in New Hampshire and may play a heightened role in decision-making, due to increasingly scarce fiscal resources. As a tool of educational reform, assessment may also be used to support or discontinue various activities or procedures.

In addition, assessment has helped to foster an understanding about the measurement and comparison of course equivalencies. This kind of understanding is further promoting some much-needed discussion surrounding transfer of credits among various institutions, courses and programs.

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NEW JERSEY

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

Assessment was initiated by the New Jersey Board of Higher Education as a collaborative effort involving the Department of Higher Education and the institutions using statewide committees and special councils.

Description of the Initiative:

New Jersey has two statewide assessment programs: the Basic Skills Assessment Program and the College Outcomes Evaluation Program (COEP). Both are funded by the legislature partly through the state Department of Higher Education and partly to the colleges directly.

The Basic Skills Assessment Program was introduced by the Board in 1977. It is used to place entering students in appropriate courses, to measure statewide the proficiencies of entering freshmen and to assess the effectiveness of remedial programs at each institution. All entering freshmen are required to take a placement test developed by the New Jersey Basic Skills Council (composed of faculty from all sectors of higher education in the state), and its advisory committees, in cooperation with the College Board and under a contract with the Educational Testing Service. Test results are also sent to the state's high schools. A number of reports are available on both the test results and the institutions' program effectiveness.

COEP, created in 1985, employs multiple indicators to assess the public institutions of higher education in the state. Most of these indicators are defined locally by each institution according to its mission, and include: general education; program major; personal development, satisfaction, and involvement of students; faculty research, scholarship, and creative expression; and institutional impact on its community. Several indicators (e.g., access and retention rates) are commonly defined and assessed.

An important component of COEP is the assessment of general intellectual skills which include critical thinking, problem solving, quantitative reasoning, and writing. Developed with the technical assistance of Educational Testing Service, the GIS Assessment has no multiple choice questions but rather utilizes a series of academic tasks which seek to replicate those skills expected by faculty of all college students. After two years of extensive pilot testing to establish reliability and validity, the test was first administered statewide in the spring of 1990 to 5,000 students representing each public institution. The GIS Assessment has no multiple choice questions but rather utilizes a series of academic tasks which seek to replicate those skills expected by faculty of all college students. After two years of extensive pilot testing to establish reliability and validity, the test was first administered statewide in the spring of 1990 to 5,000 students representing each public institution. The GIS Assessment is not a gateway test but a measure of institutional effectiveness. The results will be used to foster curricular and pedagogical review at each college and university.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purposes of the state's assessment initiative are twofold: (a) statewide improvement of undergraduate education, and (b) accountability as to the effectiveness of higher education.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

Both the Basic Skills Assessment Program and the College Outcomes Evaluation Program include statewide testing, common outcomes measures, and reporting of data. The Basic Skills program uses the New Jersey College Basic Skills Placement Test at each institution, sets common policies (e.g., mandatory placement and testing) and assesses each remedial program on common outcome variables (pre- and post-testing, retention, GPA, performance in subsequent courses, and academic survival rates). Standards have also been promulgated on each of these outcomes measures. COEP uses its recently developed GIS Assessment as well as commonly defined indicators including; access, retention, graduation rates, economic impact, and post-collegiate activities. Results from certification/licensure exams will also be compiled. COEP also employs a statewide student unit record enrollment (SURE) system developed separately by the Department of Higher Education that provides longitudinal cohort analyses of enrolled students including transfers across institutions.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

According to schedules set by the Basic Skills Council, and the COEP Council, each institution submits annual reports on its assessment initiatives and results.

Funding:

Funding is separate for each assessment program. Each college receives funding for remediation. Students placed in developmental courses are funded on an equal FTE basis at four-year public colleges and at a 1.75 ratio at community colleges. At the Department level, $850,000 was available in FY90 for test development, scoring, and analysis as well as statewide program evaluation and other educational activities.

New Jersey has also directed special funding to COEP-related assessment activities. One million dollars of special funding has been distributed to several four year public institutions for assessment purposes which has become part of the budget base at these institutions. In addition, special funding was available through the Governor's Challenge Grant Program for assessment. One of the recipients of this grant was Kean College which has incorporated a strong value-added component into its curriculum. At the Department level, the budget for assessment in FY90 was $450,000. Most four-year institutions and all community colleges have used existing staff and resources to implement their assessment activities.

Comments:

The Board and Department of Higher Education remain committed to assessment, and implementation of procedures continues based upon timetables proposed by the Basic Skills and COEP Councils. These efforts have received tangible support from the New Jersey legislature and new Governor Jim Florio.

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NEW MEXICO

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

Assessment as an effective element to heighten accountability and quality instruction was recommended in the Strategic Plan for Higher Education in New Mexico adopted by the state Commission on Higher Education in 1988.

A recent bill -- HB 4 -- which was passed by the legislature in February 1990 in special session and signed by Governor Garrey Carruthers requires all segments of public education, including postsecondary, to submit an annual "report card" to the governor and legislature, which is to include results of an assessment initiative on learning outcomes.

Description of the Initiative:

Accountability:

The Statewide Accountability Program as recommended in the Strategic Plan would involve:

- The development of criteria for assessing the effectiveness of higher education that could include studies on retention, technology transfer, research activities, and surveys of graduates from both two- and four-year institutions.

- Once the criteria are developed, the plan recommends the Commission should determine specific indicators to be used for comparability in statewide assessment.

- Based on the assessment criteria and its indicators, the institutions should establish goals, and a schedule to meet those goals consistent with the state's strategic plan for meeting these objectives.

The recommendation recognizes the importance of institutions designing assessment procedures based upon their own needs for information on learning outcomes and program effectiveness. It recommends that the accountability program be designed to assure institutional diversity in assessment.

Annual Report Card:

According to the new legislation, the Commission on Higher Education is to submit by November 15 a "report card" to the governor and legislature which will allow for institutional comparisons. The report is to include institutional data on such criteria as (a) results of a learner-outcome assessment program; (b) student retention rates; (c) percent of lower division instructional courses taught by full professors; (d) time faculty spend in student advisement; (e) placement data on graduates; (f) longitudinal data on participation rates of minorities; (g) percent of graduate students with in-state, undergraduate degrees; (h) transfer rates from two- to four-year institutions; and (i) rates of placement in remedial programs at two-year schools.

The legislation further provides that the commission "shall make no funding recommendation, capital outlay recommendation, distribution or certification on behalf of any public, postsecondary institution that has not submitted the information required pursuant to this section."

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of the state's accountability program is to promote educational improvement within the institutions. Institution-based assessment is viewed as essential to this effort.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

The Commission on Higher Education maintains a strong statewide data base system that includes information on various forms of funding, costs, students and faculty, along with information on student migration and course activity. Its uses for assessment purposes are currently evolving.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

The strategic plan recommends that the Commission publish an annual report of the statewide and institutional assessment results that are compiled through the accountability program. The Institutional Planning Guidelines for 1989-90 also require institutions to submit a report which includes plans and progress they have made in the area of assessment. These reports are due May 15, 1990.

Funding:

The strategic plan recommends that the legislature create a System Development Fund which would enable the Commission to provide financial incentives to specifically reward and encourage institutions to meet goals related to their mission, or state-wide objectives, such as accountability. While the legislature did not appropriate a System Development Fund in the 1990 session, the Commission will continue to seek appropriations for this resource.

Comments:

Efficiency and productivity are viewed as substantial factors in any quality initiative because New Mexico's system of higher education is comparatively expensive as a result of its high proportion of public institution enrollments, and the large number of institutions relative to the state's population. New Mexico ranks 15th among the states in the relative cost of its higher education system. State public education -- both K-12 and postsecondary -- accounts for about two-thirds of the annual expenditures in the state general fund of about $1.5 billion.

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NEW YORK

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

For "decades," institution-based assessment has been mandated by regulation of the New York State Education Department.

Description of the Initiative:

The regulatory mandate reads as follows:

> To be registered, each curriculum shall . . . show evidence of careful planning. Institutional goals and the objectives of each curriculum and of all courses shall be clearly defined in writing, and a reviewing system shall be devised to estimate the success of students and faculty in achieving such goals and objectives. The content and duration of curricula shall be designed to implement their purposes.
>
> For each curriculum the institution shall designate a body of faculty who, with the academic officers of the institution, shall be responsible for setting curricular objectives, for determining the means by which achievement of objectives is measured, for evaluating the achievement of curricular objectives and for providing academic advice to students. The faculty shall be sufficient in number to assure breadth and depth of instruction and the proper discharge of all other faculty responsibilities. The ratio of faculty to students in each course shall be sufficient to assure effective instruction.

The regulatory mandate by the State Department of Education affects all public, postsecondary institutions in the two major systems -- the State University of New York and the City University of New York -- and all independent colleges and universities, as well as all the proprietary, degree-granting institutions in the state. In addition, CUNY -- which includes 10 four-year colleges and seven community colleges -- has required a basic skills test of all entering students since September 1978. The test is for placement purposes only, and does not limit access. However, students who fail the basic skills test at entry must pass it prior to their junior year.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of institutional assessment in New York is the statewide improvement of undergraduate education.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

The regulatory mandate of the State Department of Education is designed to foster assessment efforts within the institution. It is not designed to collect data for purposes of comparisons among the postsecondary schools.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

Results of assessment based upon the regulatory mandate are used primarily in program review and approval processes conducted by the Department of Education.

Funding:

Institutions do not receive any specific or targeted funding for assessment. These activities are funded through the general institutional appropriation.

Comments:

Assessment is expected to increase in importance in New York. The periodic reviews of institution by the Department of Education are beginning to focus more on "outcomes" as opposed to "inputs."

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NORTH CAROLINA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) which accredits postsecondary institutions in the state has adopted a requirement on assessment. In addition, an accountability mandate was passed by the 1989-90 legislature, and the University of North Carolina sponsors its own set of assessment activities as well.

Description of the Initiative:

The SACS requirement, adopted in June 1987, is formulated as a criteria for "institutional effectiveness." While the effect of this criteria is not totally clear to member institutions, the element must be included in the self-study report institutions must submit to SACS to maintain accreditation.

The legislative mandate requires the Board of Governors of the University of North Carolina to develop assessment plans for each of its institutions. These plans are to be developed and submitted to the General Assembly by January 15, 1991. The plans are to focus on issues of student learning and development, faculty development and quality, and progress towards the institutional goals. The Board shall also identify a number of assessment measures required on all campuses in order to ensure systemwide assessment.

Institutional assessment involves a number of both new and continuing activities. For many years, the Board of Governors has required reviews and evaluations of the various departments and degree programs. Data on results of licensing examinations for various professions provides another source of assessment of institutional programs. The scope and volume of remedial coursework is also monitored and assessed for other purposes, such as admission policies.

In 1977, a systemwide student tracking system was initiated which meets "assessment" criteria, but it was not established for this purpose. The system provides data on retention and graduation rates by year of entry, cohort group (freshman, lower division transfer, upper division transfer, masters, doctorate or first professional), race, sex and year of follow-up (from one to seven years following graduation).

For nearly two decades, the University has also conducted follow-up studies of graduates of its 16 constituent institutions. The graduates of the classes of 1974, 1979, 1984 and 1988 have been studied, with focus on their background, their employment experiences, and their plans for postgraduate or professional education.

Within the past year, the University has also introduced a system for monitoring and reporting student preparation. Entering freshman are evaluated according to university admission requirements on the basis of their transcripts, and then the performance of these students is reported back to the high terms in terms of their compliance with the requirements. Once this reporting system is fully established in 1990, it is expected that the volume of remedial work the University must offer will significantly decline.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of the state's assessment initiatives is to publicly demonstrate the effectiveness of higher education to the legislature and the general public.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

Apart from SAT scores that are required of all freshman applicants in the UNC system, there is no uniform testing of students attending campuses of the University of North Carolina system.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

The legislative mandate requires that the accountability plans provide for annual assessment and a reporting of these results to both the UNC Board of Governors and the state legislature.

Funding:

There is no special, separate funding set aside for assessment.

Comments:

The growing interest in assessment has focused new attention on all kinds of reporting and monitoring activities that support assessment goals and help to measure educational outcomes.

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NORTH DAKOTA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

There is no legislative nor executive mandate for assessment in North Dakota. But institutions and the state Board of Higher Education are involved in terms of overall planning for quality improvement.

Description of the Initiative:

Assessment is part of the state's new seven-year plan for higher education, scheduled to go into effect in 1990.

The plan calls for the system and institutions to use a management approach called Total Quality Improvement. The purposes of the approach are similar to those of assessment, but it is based on the premise that "you cannot inspect quality into student learning at the end of the line." Accordingly, assessment initiatives will be determined locally, incorporated into all institutional functions, and oriented towards ensuring the quality of each step in the process, as well as the outcome of each process.

Primary Purpose:

The usual purposes of assessment, such as improvement of undergraduate education and accountability to the legislature and general public, are salient in the state, but the term "assessment" is not in use as a method of achieving these ends.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

The state does not require any kind of uniform testing of postsecondary students. At this point, the ACT test is required of all incoming freshmen, but for advisory and placement purposes only.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

If institutions have assessment results available, they can be used for program review and new program approval.

Funding:

Since North Dakota has no special initiative for assessment, there is no targeted funding set aside for it.

Comments:

Assessment is not a common term in use with legislators, the governor, or members of the Board of Higher Education. It is anticipated that any assessment or planning initiatives will arise at the institutional level.

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OHIO

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

A higher education assessment mandate was included in the Omnibus School Reform Act (SB 140) which went into effect on October 1, 1989. The bill originated with the governor and won legislative backing.

Description of the Initiative:

The bill, as initially put forth by the governor's office, would have hiked taxes on behalf of education, in exchange for greater accountability. While the ultimate increase to education was not as much as proposed, about 4 to 5% more, the accountability provision was nonetheless retained in the bill.

The tool the legislation provides for accountability is the Commission on Education Improvement. The commission has five members from the state Senate; five members from the House of Representatives, and three appointed members -- one each by the governor's office, the state Board of Regents, and the state Board of Education. The legislation provides that by January 1, 1990, the goals and objectives for higher education are to be articulated and reported to the Commission.

The goals and objectives are to address five areas: (1) excellence in undergraduate education; (2) research; (3) job training; (4) adult literacy; and (5) access to higher education.

The indicators for measuring progress towards these objectives are to be defined and reported on by June 30, 1990.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of the state's assessment initiative is accountability -- to define and enforce minimum standards for all sectors and institutions.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

The particulars of Ohio's assessment initiative, including data collection, have not been formulated as yet.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

The Ohio Board of Regents is to give an initial progress report to the Commission on Education Improvement in June 1991, and to issue reports thereafter every other year to the Commission.

Funding:

The targeted funding for assessment that was to accompany the initiative was eliminated from the legislation prior to passage. As a result, assessment must be funded through the general appropriation for higher education.

Comments:

Plans are to structure the assessment initiative so as to engage faculty in the process, and focus on programmatic improvements.

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OKLAHOMA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

There are no specific mandates in place for postsecondary institutions in the state. However, the state Board of Regents is looking at assessment as part of a model program involving program review and research on learning styles.

Description of the Initiative:

Assessment is expected to increase in importance, and while there is no specific mandate currently in place, an initiative may evolve particularly to address issues of student retention and graduation. To advise the state Regents on policies for assessment, a joint committee composed of institutional personnel from both Student Affairs and Academic Affairs has been established.

Primary Purpose:

The primary focus of assessment in Oklahoma is the improvement of undergraduate education.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

The state has a statewide unit record system which maintains full student transcripts including grades and course completion data. Some of the state's private institutions participate as well in this system. If and when an assessment program is initiated in Oklahoma, the unit record system may serve as a resource for tracking data and assimilating information.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

Except as related to program review, institutions are not required to submit any kind of assessment reports to the Board of Regents.

Funding:

While no program is currently in place, it is envisioned that targeted funding will be a part of any model program involving assessment.

Comments:

As assessment is emerging in Oklahoma, the primary uses are likely to be in the areas of program review, approval of any new programs, and assessing individual performance of students.

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OREGON

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

Currently, there is no assessment mandate in Oregon. The legislature has considered a few bills on the subject, but as yet none of them have passed.

Description of the Initiative:

While there is no current mandate, those concerned with the issue are in the early stages of thinking about assessment and what approaches would be most viable in the state.

Primary Purpose:

It is premature to assign a specific purpose to assessment in Oregon since no mandate has evolved as yet.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

There is no state-level collection of data relating to assessment currently in place in Oregon.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

As there is no state-level assessment, there are currently no approval nor reporting requirements related to assessment.

Funding:

While there is no targeted funding for assessment, there is a general expectation that institutions will manage their resources effectively and use appropriate evaluation techniques.

Comments:

In 1990, the Office of Educational Policy and Planning is going to address issues related to educational results and outcomes. The primary intent of this focus will be to identify how increased activity in this area can strengthen and improve undergraduate education and be responsive to the public.

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PENNSYLVANIA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

Pennsylvania has no specific mandate in place for assessment, although both the governor and legislature have taken an interest in it.

Description of the Initiative:

While no mandates exist, institution-based assessment is emerging on campus with encouragement from such groups as American Association for Higher Education, the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools (an accrediting body), and Education Commission of the States. Interest in assessment is also increasing because of the growing general interest in accountability for academic outcomes.

Comments:

Staff and members of the state Board of Education, the Department of Education, the institutions, and the legislature are attempting to become better informed about assessment in order to respond to nascent pressure to explore common measurement of outcomes across all institutions.

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PUERTO RICO

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

There is no specific mandate for assessment in Puerto Rico, but new and revised policies both at the board and institutional levels indicate an orientation towards assessment.

Description of the Initiative:

Provisions relating to assessment are included in both the newly-revised regulations for licensure and accreditation of private institutions, and procedures for program approval and review in the public institution.

In the public institution -- the University of Puerto Rico -- a policy statement regarding what a baccalaureate experience should provide has been produced and circulated.

In terms of the use of assessment within the framework of policy review, the process of internal review by each campus is already underway.

Primary Purpose:

The major purpose of assessment is to stimulate curricular action and attention at the institutional level. The whole issue of assessment in Puerto Rico is being treated primarily as an academic issue and not an accountability issue.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

There is no collection of common assessment data of Puerto Rico postsecondary students. However, entering students take a modified, Spanish version of the SAT which was prepared by the Puerto Rico College Board.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

In Puerto Rico, assessment is being engaged in through the program review and approval process for public institutions, and the licensure process for private institutions.

Funding:

Assessment is not specifically funded, but is considered in terms of other functions within the appropriation for higher education.

Comments:

The involvement of the chancellor of the University of Puerto Rico has been "crucial" in advancing assessment as a tool towards improving undergraduate education, and recognizing its value as well in the area of student persistence and retention.

An institution-based approach to assessment is preferred in Puerto Rico. On a larger scale, data collection and processing would be impractical and costly. A large data base that would support an assessment effort is not currently in place, but the use of Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) reports for this purpose is being explored.

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RHODE ISLAND

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The Rhode Island Board of Governors for Higher Education mandated in December 1988 use of outcome measures as one of several indicators to be used in its institutional review process.

Description of the Initiative:

The mandate to use outcome measures was incorporated into the board's policy on Quality in Higher Education, Program and Institutional Review Processes that was originally adopted in June 1986. According to the policy, institutional reviews are to be conducted every three years through the state's Office of Higher Education.

The outcome measures specified in the policy ask institutions to provide information on student retention rates and the results of any value-added assessment techniques that are in place or planned. The policy also requests performance data, such as entrance, retention and exit standards, within students' major fields, as well as teacher education. Also requested as part of this process is student performance data that is returned to the high school from which the student graduated, and data based on follow-up of graduates, and student/alumni satisfaction surveys.

While these particular indicators are named, they are not all specifically required. The responsibility for selecting and reporting on the quality indicators rests with the institution.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of the board's assessment initiative is to secure better information on what institutions are doing.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

There is no common testing or assessment data collected across all institutions. The institutions are responsible for developing their own assessment indicators reflective of their own role and mission.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

Assessment plans are not required from the institution, but reporting on outcome measures is required as part of the institutional review process conducted every three years.

Funding:

Institutions must use existing resources to comply with the board policy.

Comments:

It appears that more kinds of assessment are occurring at the institutional level than was previously realized.

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SOUTH CAROLINA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

Assessment was initiated through the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education in a broad policy document called The Cutting Edge adopted in October 1987. This policy document was largely adopted into law in 1988 (See South Carolina State Code 59-103 and 59-104).

Description of the Initiative:

The assessment initiative of the higher education reform act requires institutions to establish and maintain a system of educational effectiveness, and to specifically provide for measures of student achievement. In accordance with this directive, the Commission has outlined a set of components that are to be addressed by the institutional plans. They include assessment in the areas of (a) general education; (b) in the major or concentration; (c) through licensing and certification exams; (d) external program evaluations; (e) alumni follow-up studies; (f) entry-level skills; (g) compliance with admission standards; (h) remedial and developmental programs; (i) achievement of students transferring from two- to four-year institutions; (j) retention and attrition data; (k) minority participation rates for both faculty and students; (l) academic performance of student athletes; (m) assessment of student development based on extra-curricular criteria; (n) library usage; (o) administrative and financial processes; (p) physical plant; (q) public service involvement; and (r) academic research.

Using the above components as a design, institutions are each to submit to the Commission a "Plan for Assessing Institutional Effectiveness" by January 1, 1990. The institutions are to report annually on implementation of the assessment components, with full initial reporting on all elements by 1991-92.

While assessment is mandated by legislation and guided by elements described by the Commission, it is expected that the institutions will take full ownership of their design and development. The guidelines say:

> To be meaningful, the assessment of institutional effectiveness is to be ongoing and is a shared responsibility between administrators and faculty. The college or university community must take ownership in the process and be committed to learning and improving collectively through the careful analysis of assessment data. Information generated by assessment should become an integral part of the institution's planning process.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of the state's assessment initiative is to improve the quality of education with accountability as a secondary benefit.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

Institutions in the state maintain data records to comply with the state's program on equity and access. Institutions are also to use a modified NCAA reporting form to report on academic performance of athletes, but there is no statewide collection of testing or other assessment data at this point.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

All institutions are to submit an annual report on the assessment of institutional effectiveness prior to July 1 of each year. As of January 1990, all 33 public postsecondary institutions had submitted institutional effectiveness plans. The first set of institutional effectiveness plans was submitted to the Commission on Higher Education in June 1989. A summary report on these plans was published in January 1990.

Notably, the South Carolina reporting process places responsibility on the institutions to describe how they interpret and use assessment data rather than to just report such data. This process is considered a key component towards translating simple reporting of information into actions for improvement.

Funding:

Institutions do not each receive special funding for assessment, but there has been some project funding for assessment. The state and the federal Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) have funded pilot projects and an assessment network housed at Winthrop College.

Comments:

The assessment initiative in South Carolina is part of a comprehensive effort tied heavily to planning and aimed broadly at institutional effectiveness, not just the measurement of student outcomes.

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SOUTH DAKOTA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The South Dakota Board of Regents adopted a far-reaching assessment program in 1984 that involved testing of freshmen and sophomores with American College Testing (ACT) instruments, and seniors with a variety of instruments. The prescribed testing was dropped in 1987 due to failure of funding and to reflect recommendations from an assessment committee that said assessment should flow from institutional needs and concerns.

Description of the Initiative:

The revised assessment program was launched in the spring of 1987, and continues to address the need for assessment of universally-accepted competencies. It also allows for greater institutional autonomy in the selection of assessment instruments for specific academic programs and/or outcomes.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of the state's assessment initiative is to provide internal rather than external accountability, i.e. to ensure that the curriculum is producing the desired result from the faculty's perspective, although the results may also be used for external accountability purposes.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

There are no common assessment instruments in use in the current assessment program.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

Institutions are required to report to the Board of Regents on their assessment efforts, but not according to any kind of prescribed schedule.

Funding:

A $5 per semester student fee went into effect in 1985 in order to fund the state's initial efforts in the area of student assessment. Student fees and an internal reallocation of resources also fund the revised assessment initiative which is currently in effect.

Comments:

The initiatives have generated significant activity in the area of assessment, and it is currently being tied to other existing evaluations, such as program review, accreditation criteria and state accountability reports.

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TENNESSEE

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The current assessment initiative in Tennessee is incorporated into a set of goals for all levels of public education called Tennessee Challenge 2000 which was adopted into legislation in April 1989. It specifically directs the Tennessee Higher Education Commission to establish both long and short-term goals for higher education.

Description of the Initiative:

According to the new Challenge legislation, the THEC staff is to work cooperatively with the institutional governing boards to develop long-term quantifiable goals for Tennessee higher education which are also to reflect qualitative improvements in higher education. Following passage of the legislation in April 1989, an advisory committee was created to assist in the development of these goals and objectives. The Commission adopted a final version of these goals and objectives on April 20, 1990, and they were submitted to the Special Joint Committee of the legislature on April 30, 1990 for both review and approval.

Chief sponsor of this legislation was Representative John Bragg, who also sponsored another mandate to higher education that was in effect from 1984-89. The prior mandate articulated 14 distinct goals and the method for measurement of each of them. The current Challenge initiative creates a process allowing greater involvement in goal formulation and measurement from the THEC and the institutions which must accomplish the objectives.

Of the "Legislative Benchmarks" in effect from 1984-89, those that relate to assessment include increasing retention rates; increasing average scores of students and graduates on such standardized tests as the ACT, SAT, NTE, GRE, ACT-Comp, and professional licensing examinations; enlarging library holdings; attracting greater funding for research and public service programs; increasing rates of job placement for vocational graduates; matching vocational offerings to the occupational opportunities in the school's particular geographic area; eliminating college credit for remedial education, and reducing the number of remedial courses offered at technical institutes and community colleges.

In addition to the use of the legislative benchmarks, Tennessee has also established use of performance funding to reward institutions who can successfully demonstrate improvement. The interest in "pay-for-performance" arose as early as 1975 in Tennessee when a pilot project was conducted on ways to assess college performance. About half the state's colleges and universities participated in the project -- funded primarily through foundations -- which continued until 1978.

The first state Performance Funding plan was launched in 1979. It embodied multiple assessment approaches, and allowed institutions to earn up to 2% of their state appropriation by competing against their own past record. Until 1982, the primary emphasis was on implementing an assessment plan that met state guidelines, and allowing baselines for measurement to be firmly established. Then in 1983, the state

introduced new guidelines that increased requirements for demonstrating improvement while at the same time increasing the budgetary incentives from 2 to 5% of the institution's state appropriation.

Other initiatives to address institutional quality include the "Centers of Excellence" program proposed by the governor in 1983, and the "Chairs of Excellence" program promoted shortly thereafter by the legislature. These quality improvements in education were funded in part by a penny increase in the state sales tax which was adopted in 1984.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of Tennessee's assessment initiative is the statewide improvement of undergraduate education.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

Based on the state's early efforts in assessment, there is a wide assortment of test and other data collected on students. The state engages in uniform statewide testing of entering students for purposes of assessing basic skills. While there is no "rising junior" test, all seniors must take the ACT comp for schools to participate in the Performance Funding program. Also, every institution must survey alumni every two years using a common instrument developed by a statewide task force. The state also collects commonly-defined retention information for all institutions based on a statewide unit record system.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

The five-year objectives based on the Legislative Benchmarks from 1984-89 required statewide approval and reporting, and the Challenge 2000 goals mandate a similar process. The new Challenge legislation passed in April 1989 requires the THEC to submit its initial progress report towards achievement of the new institutional goals to a special joint legislative committee. Formulated with the help of an advisory committee, THEC submitted a final version of the new goals and objectives to the special joint committee on April 30, 1990.

In order to receive funds under the Performance Funding program, institutions are required to demonstrate improvement to the THEC and the legislature which also involves a reporting and approval process.

Funding:

The Performance Funding program allowed institutions up to 2% more of its state appropriation through 1982 if it met its assessment goals. The budgetary incentive was increased to 5% in 1983.

Comments:

Despite heavy involvement in assessment for many years, its importance is nonetheless expected to increase with the development of specific goals and annual benchmarks formulated in response to the Challenge 2000 legislation.

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TEXAS

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The state legislature mandated a basic skills testing program in its 1987 session which has become known as the Texas Academic Skills Program (TASP). In the same session, the legislature approved an incentive and initiative funding program with "assessment" as one criterion for receiving funding, and a five-year review of quality and productivity of all doctoral programs in the state.

Description of the Initiative:

The TASP became effective in the fall of 1989. It requires that all incoming freshmen take the Texas Academic Skills Test after they are accepted as students, and before they complete nine semester hours of college-level courses. If the institution offers initial placement testing, students are allowed to take up to 15 hours of college-level coursework before they are required to take the Test. There are three parts to the test: reading, writing and mathematics. Until all parts of the test are passed, students must continuously participate in remediating needed areas. Students must pass all parts of the test before completing 60 semester hours of college-level coursework or they will be limited to only remedial and lower division courses before they can receive a certificate or Associate degree.

Students who entered college in the fall of 1989 were exempt from the TASP test if they had earned at least three semester hours of college-level credit prior to that time. As a result, enrollment in community colleges rose 22% in the summer of '89 over the prior year. Due to this and some other exemptions, only 18.4% of community college freshmen took the test in fall 1989, and only 39% of the entering freshmen at four-year institutions were recorded as taking the test. Due to the expiration of the exemptions, it is expected that a greater percentage of freshman will be taking the TAST in the fall 1990.

The incentive and funding initiative passed in 1987, and was reauthorized by the 1989 legislature. But, no funding was attached to it in either biennium, so it is not in effect.

The study of doctoral programs offered by public postsecondary institutions is ongoing, and the report is expected in December 1992.

Elements of the TASP and related initiatives remain under study and continual review. The Commissioner of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board appointed an Advisory Committee on Undergraduate Education following passage of the 1987 legislation. The advisory commission largely consisted of membership from the universities and community colleges. That committee addressed issues raised by the legislation through three working groups on (1) assessment; (2) the core curriculum; and (3) feedback, i.e., reporting, of the TASP results.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of TASP and related initiatives is the statewide improvement of undergraduate education and improved retention to graduation.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

The state board collects four types of information on each freshman student based on a unit-record system: (1) remedial coursework or other remedial intervention, such as tutoring, in which the student is engaged; (2) the basis for remediation, such as a diagnostic placement test or TASP Test result; (3) the TASP Test score; and (4) the student's GPA, and their particular grades in the first college-level math and English courses in which they have enrolled. These results (both in aggregate and individual form) are forwarded to the Texas Education Agency, which sends the student performance data to the students' high school.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

With the TASP Test and related information forming the basis of a student record system, the state Coordinating board will collect information on students throughout their college careers. This information will be used to evaluate the effectiveness of remediation and advising that is required, and will assist with compiling student retention, transfer and graduation rates.

Funding:

The 1989 legislature granted public postsecondary institutions $22 million for development of remedial activities, such as tutoring and learning centers in addition to $70.5 million generated by formula funding for remedial coursework for the 1990-91 biennium.

Comments:

At this point in time, no widespread program to assess all of public postsecondary undergraduate education is planned, although pilot projects on assessment have been recommended by the Subcommittee on Assessment. A report of the Subcommittee on Core Curriculum has been received by the Coordinating Board and recommended to all public institutions of higher education for their use in further developing and evaluating their Core Curriculum. Institutions are to evaluate their Core Curriculum every five years and report the results of the evaluation to the Coordinating Board beginning in May 1991.

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UTAH

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

A policy advocating institutional assessment to improve educational quality was approved by the State Board of Regents in its 1986 Utah System of Higher Education Master Plan.

Description of the Initiative:

The policy adopted by the Regents provides the state board will continue to set broad directions and objectives for improvement, but allows that the institutions will retain responsibility for specific implementation of any assessment initiative.

The policy notes that much assessment is already going on through entrance exams, licensing and graduate school exams, and surveys on job placement and employer satisfaction surveys. The policy reviews current assessment procedures that are underway in other states, and says an appropriate assessment system should be developed on each campus.

While eschewing mandated standardized testing, the policy suggests as possible alternatives such techniques as (1) "value-added" student outcome assessment; (2) assessment of "cognitive learning" and "skill development"; (3) professional or field-related assessment at graduation; (4) student opinion surveys regarding their college/university experience; (5) opinion surveys of non-returning students, including their reasons for learning; (6) career and placement records; and (7) longitudinal assessment of student perceptions of their higher education five years or more after graduation.

The staff of the state board is currently preparing an interim progress report on how institutions are faring in the area of assessment. Otherwise, the institutions are expected to report to the board every five years on their implementation of assessment procedures.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of assessment in Utah is to stimulate curricular action and attention at the institutional level.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

Institutions are responsible for establishing assessment initiatives in Utah. There is no common, statewide collection of assessment data.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

Institutions are expected to report to the State Board every five years on the development and implementation of their assessment plans and procedures.

Funding:

Institutions are expected to fund assessment with existing resources and current appropriations.

Comments:

Assessment has become incorporated into the state's strategic planning process, but it remains too early to tell what eventual impact it will have on the educational process.

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VERMONT

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

Vermont does not have a statewide governing board nor have there been legislative mandates regarding assessment. Assessment efforts are largely directed by the institutions and their own trustees.

Description of the Initiative:

The board of trustees of the Vermont State Colleges -- which includes five public postsecondary institutions, but not the University of Vermont -- maintains two specific policies related to assessment. They are board policies on (1) program review and approval, and (2) basic skills testing and appropriate follow-up for individual students.

Program review is conducted once every five years at each of the five colleges. As part of this review, programs within each college are expected to collect and describe performance or outcomes information as is appropriate. Information may include major field outcomes, student satisfaction, employer satisfaction, test results, etc.

Since 1979, the board of trustees has required basic skills testing of all entering students with appropriate placement and programs of instruction.

In addition, the regional accrediting agency, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, also requires thorough self-study and reporting once every 10 years. Most often there are also more frequent "focused" studies.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of the activities related to assessment is the improvement of undergraduate education.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

The five colleges in the VSC system are presently sharing information about basic skills testing, student progress, retention, etc.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

Reports on program self-study and review are required by the VSC Board of Trustees. Special program review activities may also occur outside the regular five-year cycle.

Funding:

There are no appropriations related specifically to assessment activities.

Comments:

The emphasis on assessment at VSC has increased in the past few years. The issue has focused more attention on institutional effectiveness and student outcomes, as opposed to assuming certain outcomes based upon the college environment.

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VIRGINIA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The legislature initiated an assessment policy in 1986 when it directed all public institutions in the state "to establish assessment programs to measure student achievement" in Senate Joint Resolution 83.

Description of the Initiative:

The legislative mandate directed the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia to spearhead the effort by establishing assessment guidelines in cooperation with institutions in the state.

As a result, SCHEV published assessment guidelines in April 1987. The guidelines encouraged institutions to use multiple indicators of assessment, such as:

- Absolute measures of student learning (such as measured by achievement tests) or a "value-added" approach.
- Existing information, such as that pertaining to admissions, retention and graduation rates; community college transfer rates; licensing and certification examinations; job placement and alumni.
- New, faculty-developed assessment measures.
- Basic skills testing and evaluating the success of remediation.

Institutions needed at least to assess students in the major and general education, survey alumni, assess the success of remediation, and provide information on their graduates' success to feeder high schools and community colleges. The guidelines allowed the institutions to develop their assessment plans, but a gubernatorial directive established in May 1987 that institutions would be eligible for incentive funding for the 1988-90 biennium on the basis of whether or not they had an "adequate student assessment plan." By June 30 of that year, less than two months later, all institutions had submitted an assessment plan to the SCHEV. Although some required some revision, all were eventually judged adequate.

Based on the institutional budgets, funds averaging $12 per full-time student were granted to the institutions to implement assessment procedures. The institutions submitted progress reports in 1988, and in 1989 full reports on the results of the first biennium of assessment. The state now enters in 1990-92 its second full biennium of institutional funding and programming for assessment.

Summary results of the institutional assessment efforts have been incorporated into the biennial Virginia Plan for Higher Education. The plan reports that a wide scope of assessment activity has been undertaken, with overall enthusiasm, generally strong commitment to the process, and results that have been used, in many cases, to improve curricula.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of the state's assessment initiative is to stimulate curricular action and attention at the institutional level.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

There is no common collection of data, although efforts to track retention and success rates of students transferring from two-year to four-year schools have increased as a result of assessment.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

Originally, all assessment plans were approved by the SCHEV, working with a group of external consultants, in the latter half of 1988. Annual progress reports will not require formal Council approval, but will be reviewed and commented on by SCHEV staff. Biennial reporting of results will be reviewed by Council staff and external consultants.

Funding:

In 1988-90, the state appropriated $4.4 million ($2,962,100 from the general fund) for the biennium for institutional assessment. This money has, in the 1990-92 budget, been incorporated into the institutions' base budgets. Institutions have in many cases made significant, additional contributions.

Comments:

While the legislative agenda initially turned on public accountability, the assessment agenda as pursued by SCHEV is primarily focused on the improvement of undergraduate teaching and learning.

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WASHINGTON

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The state has no legislative mandate concerning assessment, but the State Higher Education Coordinating Board has shown leadership in this area.

Description of the Initiative:

Assessment is an inherent part of the four cornerstones of the HECB's Master Plan for higher education, which are: (1) increased access in urban areas; (2) a new basis of funding; (3) performance evaluation of institutions; and (4) strengthened admission standards.

As adopted originally in 1987 and modified in May 1989, the Board's policy on assessment directs institutions to develop multidimensional performance evaluation programs. Four-year institutions are responsible for developing assessment of the baccalaureate degree and graduate program experiences by means appropriate to each institution's curriculum. These are expected to include assessment of student competencies in composition and computation, and end-of-program assessment as well as integration of baseline data and program reviews into institutional assessment.

The policy also provides that institutions are expected to survey alumni about their level of satisfaction with their educational experience, and employers about their satisfaction with their employees' college preparation.

Based on these objectives, the institutions conducted pilot studies in the 1987-88 and 1988-89 academic years to assess the usefulness and validity of nationally normed tests for communication, computation, and critical thinking skills which were administered to students in the second semester of their sophomore year.

At the end of the pilot testing the Board concluded that a standardized test of this type is inappropriate; thus the Board moved to an alternative approach which encourages institutional flexibility within a framework of statewide objectives.

Institutions submitted their plans to the HECB in October 1989 and will provide progress reports to the Board twice yearly.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of the state's assessment initiative is the statewide improvement of undergraduate education.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

There currently is no statewide collection of common test results or other information. However, members of four-year institutions will use common items to survey alumni as to their satisfaction with their postsecondary education.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

Institutional plans were tentatively accepted by the HECB in October 1990; twice-yearly reports are expected from each public four-year institution and the community college system.

Funding:

For the 1989-90 biennium, the 1988 legislature appropriated $400,000 to each of the state's public four-year institutions for the development and implementation of assessment procedures, and $400,000 to the state's community colleges as a whole for this purpose. The Board supports increments of funding over a total of four biennia (eight years) to achieve a level of funding equal to the 75th percentile of peer institutions at both senior institutions and community colleges.

Comments:

Assessment is part of a larger effort to improve public postsecondary education in the state which has resulted in a major infusion of new funds from the legislature since 1988.

In general, the focus of assessment in Washington is moving from "monitoring" and "accountability" to use of more creative measures of assuring quality instruction and institutional renewal.

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WEST VIRGINIA

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The West Virginia Board of Regents adopted a resolution in June of 1988 declaring a need for system emphasis on assessment. The Board then appointed a special Task Force to study assessment, and recommend appropriate courses of action. A small stipend was also allocated to support assessment initiatives.

Description of the Initiative:

As organized and created by the former Board of Regents, the Task Force included a diverse membership of administrators, faculty, students and classified employees. As of July 1, 1989, the governance structure of West Virginia higher education was reorganized under two new boards -- the trustees of the University of West Virginia and the directors of the State College System. As a result, the Task Force was renamed the Assessment Council, and its membership was reconstituted through appointments made by the two chancellors of the two new systems. However, the group retains its original chair and many of the original members, and maintains its diverse membership.

The Task Force got off the ground in July 1988 with a meeting featuring a specialist in assessment which involved a thorough briefing on the history and literature of the issue. The Task Force also adopted a set of goals and principles, and used its stipend to fund pilot assessment projects during the 1988-89 school year at Concord College, Fairmont State College, West Virginia Northern Community College, and Glenville State College. A thorough summary and analysis of assessment activities currently underway at public colleges and universities was also developed based upon institutional reports on assessment requested by the Task Force.

In August 1989, the Task Force developed further recommendations on assessment based upon a review of their activities and studies of the issue. With minor modifications, these recommendations were subsequently adopted by the two new boards in the states. The boards agreed to the following major objectives for institutions with these recommendations:

- Each public college and university is urged to develop a five-year comprehensive assessment program which is compatible with its mission and educational objectives. Preliminary focus should be on learning outcomes.

- Each institution should identify available assessment data and designate personnel responsible for the direction of the campus assessment program. Emphasis should be placed on the use of available data by academic advisers and counselors.

- Inter-campus dialogue should be fostered which will provide two-year colleges with data regarding the academic performance of their graduates at four-year schools. University personnel should provide two and four-year schools with data regarding the academic performance of their graduates.

In terms of system recommendations, the boards also agreed to move ahead and seek funds for assessment from state, federal and private agency sources.

To further the state's assessment agenda, David Lutz, who directs the area of Assessment Services and Surveys for the American College Testing Service, will be addressing the state Assessment Council in May 1990. In addition, the Council will be sponsoring an assessment workshop in the fall of 1990 to help further disseminate information on the components of a successful institutional model for assessment.

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WISCONSIN

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

As a result of the state government's review of the University of Wisconsin's 1987-89 biennial budget request, UW System President Kenneth Shaw and Governor Tommy Thompson agreed that the UW System should undertake a major assessment initiative. The 1991-92 academic year was targeted for the initiation of a systemwide assessment program.

Description of the Initiative:

In fall 1987, President Shaw appointed the University of Wisconsin System Assessment and Testing Advisory Council and charged the Council with developing a systemwide approach to assessment. The Council, which included representatives from all UW System institutions, submitted its report and recommendations to UW System Administration in November 1988. Based on the Council's report and responses to the report by the U&W System campuses, President Shaw issued a set of 10 recommendations on assessment in July 1989.

The first recommendation to be implemented is to assess the verbal and quantitative skills of undergraduate students at the end of the sophomore year. Institutions are developing assessment procedures appropriate for their individual missions and will begin to assess students at the end of the sophomore year during the 1991-92 academic year. The state has provided no new funding for this assessment effort, and the UW System institutions are responsible for providing the necessary resources.

In addition to developing a systemwide approach to assessment, the UW System funded assessment pilot projects at six UW System campuses in the 1988-89 academic year. Four of these projects received continuation funding in 1989-90.

Implementation of a comprehensive assessment program in the UW System continues. President Shaw currently is developing a paper outlining current and future initiatives for presentation to the Board of Regents.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of the UW System's assessment initiative is to strengthen academic programs and enhance student learning at all UW System campuses.

Are Common Data or Test Results Collected Across the State?

Some common data or test results are collected across the University of Wisconsin System. Beginning with the 1989-90 freshmen class, all new freshmen are required to take the American College Testing Assessment for admission to UW System institutions. For the past several years, most UW System institutions have administered English, mathematics, and foreign language placement tests developed by systemwide faculty committees. A UW System Working Group on Basic Competencies recently developed a statement of competencies in English and mathematics expected of all students entering UW System institutions. All UW System institutions will be expected to assess incoming students' competencies for placement in college-level or remedial English and mathematics courses. Students' scores on the ACT mathematics and English tests will serve as a screening device, and each institution will be responsible for determining the specific instruments and performance criteria to be used for further assessment of these competencies.

Is Reporting or Approval Required of Assessment Initiatives?

The UW System institutions will be expected to report data on both remedial education placement and results of sophomore year assessment once these programs are in place. Data collection and reporting for remedial education will begin in the fall of 1990. The sophomore year assessment will begin the 1991-92 academic year.

Funding:

While legislative funding for assessment has not been forthcoming, the University of Wisconsin System Administration provided $25,000 to fund pilot projects in assessment in the 1998-89 academic year and an additional $13,500 for continuation of some of those pilot projects in 1989-90. For the past several years, the UW System also has provided financial support for the development and use of the UW System placement tests in mathematics and English.

Comments:

As a result of the University of Wisconsin System's initiatives in assessment, the Board of Regents, administrators, and faculty throughout the UW System are more aware of how assessment can help improve the quality of academic programs and enhance student learning.

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WYOMING

Origins of Assessment Interest in the State:

The Wyoming Community College Commission has no specific assessment initiative, but does require curricular review and evaluation.

Description of the Initiative:

The results of the review and evaluation required by the community college commission are used primarily for program-review purposes, and expected to address the general education curricula.

Primary Purpose:

The primary purpose of review and evaluation is to stimulate curricular attention and action at the institutional level.

Comments:

Generally, assessment and related issues are expected to increase in importance in the coming year or two.

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